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ing chocolate. We saluted him with all the demonstrations of the most profound respect; and he honored us with an inclination of the head, accompanied by such a gracious smile, as at once gained my heart. A wonderful effect, though an ordinary one, which a favorable reception from the great produces in our breasts. They must receive us very ill, indeed, before we are disgusted at their behavior.

Having drank his chocolate, he amused himself some time in playing with a large baboon that sat by him, and was called Cupid. I don't know for what reason the name of that god was bestowed on this animal, unless it was because it had all his malice; for it resembled him in nothing else. Such as it was, however, it did not fail to give vast delight to its master, who was so much charmed with its merry tricks, that he hugged it incessantly in his arms. Though Nunnez and I were not much diverted with the gambols of this beast, we feigned ourselves enchanted with its performances; which pleased the Sicilian so much, that he suspended the pleasure he enjoyed in this pastime, to tell me, "Friend, you have it in your option to be one of my secretaries; if you like the place, I will give you two hundred pistoles a-year, without any other recommendation than that of Don Fabricio." "My lord, (cried Nunnez,) I am bolder than Plato, who had not courage enough to answer for one of his friends, whom he sent to the tyrant Dionysius. I am not afraid of bringing reproaches upon myself, by vouching for my friend."

I thanked the Asturian poet with a low bow, for his obliging confidence: then addressing myself to my patron, assured him of my zeal and fidelity. This nobleman no sooner perceived that I relished his proposal, than he ordered his steward to be called: to whom having communicated something in a whisper, he said, "Gil Blas, I will tell you presently what is to be the nature of your employment. Meanwhile you may follow my steward, who has received orders concerning you." I accordingly obeyed, leaving Fabricio with the Count and Cupid.

The steward, who was a most subtle Messinese, conducted me to his apartment, where he loaded me with civilities; and sending for the tailor who had equipped the whole family, ordered him to make for me, with all dispatch, a suit of clothes of the same magnificence as those of the principal officers. The tailor having taken measure of me, and retired, "As for your lodging (said the Messinese), I know a chamber that will exactly fit you. But have you breakfast?" (added he.) When I answered in the negative, "Ah, poor lad (said he), why did not you speak? Come, I will show you to a place, where, thank heaven, you may have what you will for the asking."

So saying, he carried me down to the buttery, where we found the butler, a true Neapolitan, every whit as cunning as the Messinese. It might be said of him and the steward, These two make a pair. This honest butler, with five or six of his friends, were cramming themselves with ham, cold tongue, and other relishing bits, which obliged them to redouble their draughts. We joined these hearty cooks, and assisted them in their attacks upon the Count's best wines. While this scene passed in the buttery, another such was acted in the kitchen: the cook also treated three or four tradesmen of his acquaintance, who filled their bellies with rabbit and partridge pies: the very scullions enjoyed themselves on what they could pilfer; so that I thought myself in a house abandoned to pillage: yet these were but trifles in comparison to what I did not see.

CHAPTER XV.

Count Galiano invests Gil Blas with an employment in his house

I WENT to fetch my baggage to my new habitation; and when I returned, the Count was at dinner with several noblemen and the poet Nunnez, who called for what he wanted with an easy air, and mingled in the conversation. Nay, I observed that every word he spoke afforded pleasure to the company. What a fine thing is genius! A man of wit can easily turn himself into all shapes.

I dined with the officers, who were treated pretty much in the same manner as our patron; and in the afternoon retired to my chamber, where I began to reflect on my condition.

"Well, Gil Blas, (said I to myself,) thou art now in the service of a Sicilian Count, with whose real character thou art utterly unacquainted. If we may judge by appearance, thou wilt be in this family like a fish in the water: but we must swear to nothing; and thou ought'st to distrust thy fate, the malignity of which thou hast but too often experienced. Besides, thou dost not know for what employment thou art retained: he has already two secretaries and a steward; what service then does he expect from thee? It looks as if he intended to make thee his Mercury. In good time! One cannot be on a better footing with a nobleman, in order to make his way to a good post. He who limits himself to honorable services only, moves slowly, step by step, and seldom gains his point at last."

While I was engrossed by these fine reflections, a lacquey came to tell me, that all the company who had dined at our house were gone home, and that the Count wanted to speak

with me. I flew instantly to his apartment, where I found him lying on his couch, ready to take his afternoon's nap with his baboon, which always bore him company.

"Come hither, Gil Blas (said he), take a chair, and listen to what I am going to say." I obeyed his orders, and he spoke to me in these terms: "Don Fabricio has told me, that, among other good qualities, you possess that of attaching yourself to your masters; and that you are a young man of incorruptible integrity. These two qualifications determined me to take you into my service; for I have great occasion for an affectionate domestic, who will espouse my interest, and employ his whole attention in husbanding my estate. I am rich, it is true, but my yearly expense greatly exceeds my income. The reason is plain: I am plundered by my servants, and live in my own house as if I was in a forest among robbers. I suspect my butler and steward of having a fellow-feeling the one with the other; and this is more than enough to ruin me from top to bottom. You will say, if I have reason to think them rogues, why don't I turn them away? But where shall I find others made of a different kind of stuff? I will be satisfied with having them both observed by a man who shall have a right to inspect their conduct: and you are the person whom I have chosen for that commission; of which, if you acquit yourself well, be assured that you shall not serve an ungrateful master; for I will take care to procure for you a very advantageous settlement in Sicily."

Having spoke thus, he dismissed me, and that very evening, in presence of all his domestics, I was proclaimed superintendent of the family. This did not give the Messinese and Neapolitan great mortification at first, because they looked upon me as a jolly companion, of good composition; and concluded, that by giving me a share of the spoil, they should be allowed to go on in their old course. But they looked very silly next day, when I declared to them that I was an enemy to all misdemeanor. I demanded of the butler an account of the provision; I visited the cellar, and took an inventory of every thing he had in his charge; I mean table-linen and plate. I then exhorted them to be saving of our patron's wealth, to lay out with economy; and ended my advice, by protesting to them that I would inform that nobleman of every thing that I should observe amiss in his house. I did not stop here: resolving to have a spy, who might discover if there was any sinister intelligence between them, I cast my eyes on a scullion, who being won by my promises, assured me that I could not have applied to a more proper person to get notice of every thing that happened in the house: that the butler and steward were in confederacy, and burnt the candle at both ends; that they daily secreted one half of the provision that was bought for the family: that the Neapolitan took care of a lady who lived opposite to the college of St. Thomas; and that the Messinese entertained another at the Sun-gate: that these two gentlemen sent all sorts of provision to their nymphs every morning; and that the cook also dispatched savory messes to a widow of his acquaintance in the neighborhood; and that in consideration of his service to the other two, to whom he was entirely devoted, he disposed, as they did, of the wines in the cellar; in short, that these three domestics occasioned a most horrible expense in the Count's house. "If you doubt my report, (added the scullion,) take the trouble of going to-morrow morning about seven o'clock to the college of St. Thomas, and you shall see me loaded with a basket, which will change your doubts into certainty." "So (said I to him) thou art agent to these gallant purveyors?" "I am (he replied) employed by the butler, and one of my comrades acts for the steward."

I had the curiosity to repair next morning, at the appointed hour, to the college of St. Thomas, where I did not wait long for my spy, whom I saw coming along with a huge basket, filled with butcher's meat, poultry, and venison. I took an inventory of the particulars, of which I formed in my pocket-book a small verbal process, that I went and showed to my master, after having told the trencher-scraper that he might execute his commission as usual.

The Sicilian nobleman, who was naturally passionate, resolved, in the first transport, to turn away the Neapolitan and Messinese; but after having reflected more coolly, contented himself with dismissing the last, to whose place I succeeded; so that my office of superintendent was suppressed soon after its creation: and truly I was not sorry for it; for it was, properly speaking, no other than the honorable employment of a spy, and a post which had nothing substantial in it; whereas, by being made steward, I became master of the strong box, and that is every thing. The steward always possesses the first rank among the domestics of a great family; and there are so many small perquisites attached to his administration, that he may grow rich, even though he be an honest man.

My Neapolitan, whose budget was not yet exhausted, observing my brutal zeal, that I got up every morning to see and keep an account of what victuals were bought, no longer secreted a part; but the scullion continued to purchase the same quantity as before. By this stratagem, increasing the profit he drew from the refuse of the table, which was his perquisite, he found himself in a condition to treat his char-

or at least with dressed victuals, if he could not furnish her with raw provision. In short, the devil lost nothing in this reformation, and the Count was not a whit the better for having the phoenix of stewards in his service. The superabundance that I then perceived at every meal made me guess this new trick, which I immediately defeated, by retrenching what was superfluous in every course. This I did, however, with such prudence, that the alteration could not be perceived; one would have thought that there was still the same profusion: and yet, by this economy, I considerably diminished the expense. This was what my patron required; he wanted to retrench, without appearing less magnificent: for his avarice was subordinate to his ostentation.

There was also another abuse to be reformed: I found the wine ran out apace; if, for example, twelve cavaliers happened to dine with my master, they would exhaust fifty, and sometimes five dozen of bottles. I was astonished at this waste, and not doubting that there must be some roguery in the case, consulted my oracle, that is, my drudge, with whom I very often had private conferences, and who made a faithful report of every thing that was said or done in the kitchen, where he was not in the least suspected. He told me, that the waste, of which I complained, proceeded from a new league between the butler, cook, and those lacquies who filled the wine, and who carried off all the bottles half emptied, which was afterwards shared among the confederates. I spoke to the footmen on this subject, and threatened to turn them out of doors if ever they should think proper to repeat this practice: upon which they were reclaimed. My master, whom I took care to advertise of the most minute things which I performed for his advantage, loaded me with praises, and grew every day more and more fond of me: and I, in order to reward the good services of the scullion, created him cook's assistant.

The Neapolitan was enraged to find me always on the catch with him: and was cruelly mortified with the contradictions he underwent whenever he presented his accounts to me; for, that I might pare his nails the closer, I took the trouble of going to market, to learn the price of meat, just before he went thither; and as he attempted to impose upon me afterwards, gave him a vigorous repulse. I was very well persuaded that he cursed me a hundred times a day; but the subject of his maledictions hindered me from dreading their force. I cannot imagine how he could bear my persecutions, and remain in the service of the Sicilian nobleman. Doubtless, in spite of all my endeavors, he found his account in perseverance.

Fabricio, whom I frequently saw, and to whom I recounted all my hitherto unheard exploits, in quality of steward, was more disposed to blame than applaud my conduct. "God grant, (said he, one day,) that thou mayest be recompensed for all this disinterestedness: but between thee and me, I believe it would not fare the worse with thee if thou wast not quite so rough with the butler." "How! (answered I,) shall that robber charge in his bill ten pistoles for a fish that did not cost four, and I pass over that article?" "Why not? (he replied, coldly;) let him give thee the half of the surplus, according to custom. In good faith! my friend (continued he, shaking his head,) you are a mere ninny, and, in all appearance, will grow gray in servitude, since you neglect to flay the eel while it is in your hand. Take my word for it, fortune resembles those brisk airy coquettes who despise the gallant that stands upon ceremony."

I only laughed at the discourse of Nunnez, who laughed again in his turn; and would have persuaded me that he had only spoke in jest, being ashamed of having given me bad counsel in vain. I continued firm in my resolution of being always zealous and faithful: I felt no inclination to be otherwise; and I dare say, that in four months I saved to my master, by my economy, three thousand ducats at least.

CHAPTER XVI.

An accident happens to Count Galiano's baboon, which is the cause of great affliction to that nobleman. Gil Blas falls sick; the consequences of his distemper.

ANOUR this time, the repose of the family was strangely disturbed by an accident, which will seem trifling to the reader; though it turned out a very serious matter to the servants, and especially to me. Cupid, that baboon of which I have made mention, that animal so beloved by our master, attempting one day to leap from one window to another, acquitted himself so ill in the performance, that he fell down in the court, and dislocated his leg. The count no sooner understood this misfortune, than he uttered such piercing cries, that they were heard all over the neighborhood; and, in the excess of his grief, attacking all his servants without exception, he had well nigh made a clear house. His fury, however, was limited to cursing our negligences, and abusing us, without sparing terms of reproach. He sent immediately for those surgeons who were most expert in fractures and dislocated bones; and who, having visited the patient's leg, reduced it, and applied bandages accordingly. But though all of them assured him there was no danger, my master retained one of them in the house, to be always near the animal, until it was perfectly cured.

I should be to blame if I passed over in silence the grief and anxiety which preyed upon the heart of the Sicilian nobleman during the whole time of the cure. Will it be believed, that all the day he did not stir from his dear Cupid? He was always present when it was dressed, and got out of bed to visit him two or three times every night. But the most troublesome circumstance of all was, that every domestic in the family, and I in particular, were always up, that we might be at hand to be sent wheresoever it should be thought proper, for the service of this ape. In a word, we had no rest in the house till such time as this plaguy beast, having recovered of his fall, betook himself again to his usual caperings and tumblings. After this, can we refuse to credit the report of Suetonius, when he says Caligula loved his horse to such a degree, that he bestowed upon him a house richly furnished, with officers to serve him, and even designed to make him consul? My patron was no less charmed with his bahoos, which he would willingly have created a corregidor, had it been in his power.

An unlucky circumstance for me was, that I had surpassed all the valets in demonstrations of concern, that I might, in so doing, make my court to my master; and undergone such fatigue in behalf of Cupid, that I fell sick upon it, and was seized with such a violent fever, that I lost my senses, and know not how I was managed for fifteen days; during which I was in a manner between life and death. This only I know, that my youth struggled so successfully against the fever, and perhaps against the remedies that were administered, that at length I recovered my understanding. The first use I made of it was to perceive that I was not in my own chamber; and wanting to know the reason, I asked it of an old woman who attended me: but she replied, that I must not speak; for the physician had expressly forbid it. When we are in good health, we commonly laugh at the doctor; but when we are sick, we calmly submit to his prescriptions.

I thought proper, therefore, to hold my tongue, how much soever I longed to converse with my nurse: and was engaged in reflections on this subject, when two spruce beaux entered, dressed in velvet, with very fine ruffled linen. I imagined they were two noblemen, friends of my master, who, out of consideration for him, came to see me. On this supposition, I made an effort to sit up, and showed my respect by taking off my cap: but my nurse laid me all along again, and told me that these gentlemen were my physician and apothecary.

The doctor coming to the bedside, felt my pulse, considered my countenance, and observing all the symptoms of an immediate cure, assumed an air of triumph, as if he had greatly contributed to it: saying that there was nothing wanting to finish the work but a purge; after which he might boast of having performed a fine cure. When he had spoilt thus, he made the apothecary write a prescription, which while he dictated, he viewed himself in a glass, adjusted his periwig, and made such grimaces, that I could not help laughing in spite of my weakly condition. He then made me a solemn bow, and went away, much more engrossed by his own figure than by the medicines he had prescribed.

After his departure, the apothecary, who had not come thither for nothing, prepared himself for doing something which may be easily guessed; whether he was afraid that the old woman could not acquit herself with dexterity enough, or wanted to operate himself, in order to enhance the value of his ware; but with all his address, I don't know how it happened, the operation was scarce performed, when I restored to the operator all that he had given me, and left his velvet suit in a fine pickle. He looked upon this accident as a misfortune annexed to pharmacy, and wiping himself with a towel, in silence, went away, resolving to make me pay the scourer, to whom he was certainly obliged to send his clothes.

He returned next morning more plainly dressed, though he had no risk to run that day, in bringing the physic which the doctor had prescribed the day before. For I not only felt myself mending every moment, but had such an aversion, since the preceding day, to physicians and apothecaries, that I even cursed the universities where those gentlemen receive the power of slaying men with impunity.

In this disposition, I swore that I would take no more medicine, and wished Hippocrates to the devil, with all his gang. The apothecary, who did not mind what became of his composition provided he was paid for it, left it on the table, and retired without speaking a word. I ordered the villainous medicine to be thrown out at a window immediately, being so much prepossessed against it, that I should have thought myself poisoned had I swallowed it. To this stroke of disobedience I added another. I broke silence, and told my nurse, in a peremptory tone, that I absolutely insisted on knowing what was become of my master. The old woman, who was apprehensive of exciting in me a dangerous emotion should she gratify my curiosity; or resolving, perhaps, to irritate my distemper by her obstinacy, made no answer; but I persisted with so much passion, that she replied, at length, "Signior cavalier, you are now your own master; Count Galiano is gone back to Sicily."

I could not believe what I heard, and yet there was nothing more true. That nobleman, the very second day of my distemper, fearing that I should die at his house, had the generosity to order me to be transported, with my little effects, to a hired room, where he had abandoned me, without ceremony, to Providence and the care of a nurse. In the interim, having received an order from court, obliging him to repossess into Sicily, he set out with such precipitation, that I was not so much as thought of; whether he already numbered me with the dead, or that people of quality are troubled with short memories.

My nurse informed me of all this; and likewise assured me, it was she who had called the physician and apothecary,

that I might not perish for want of assistance. This comfortable news threw me into a profound reverie. Adieu, my advantageous settlement in Sicily! my sanguine hopes, farewell. "When any great misfortune happens to you (says a certain pope), examine yourself well, and you will always perceive that it was, in some measure, owing to your own fault." No disparagement to this holy father, I can't see how I contributed to my own mischance on this occasion.

When I found the flattering chimeras, with which I had stuffed my imagination, vanished, the next thing that I concerned myself about was my portmanteau, which I ordered her to bring to my bedside, that I might examine it. I sighed, when I perceived it open, crying, Ah! my dear portmanteau, my only consolation! you have been, I see, at the mercy of strangers. "No, no, Signior Gil Blas (said the old woman), don't be uneasy: nothing is stolen from you; I have protected your box as if it had been my own honor."

I found in it the suit of clothes which I had when I came into the Count's service, but I looked in vain for that which the Messenian had ordered to be made for me. My master had not thought proper to leave it with me, or else somebody had made free with it during my delirium. All my other baggage remained, and even a great leather purse that contained my money, which I reckoned twice, as I could not at first believe that there were but fifty pistoles remaining of two hundred and sixty that were in it before I fell sick. "What is the meaning of this, my good mother? (said I to the nurse;) my finances are terribly diminished." "And yet nobody, except myself, hath touched them (said the old woman), and I have been as frugal as possible: but sickness is very expensive; one is always laying out. Here (added the good mother, taking a packet of papers out of her pocket), here is an account of the expense, as just as the current coin, which will show that I have not employed a maravedi amiss."

I glanced over the bill, which contained fifteen or twenty pages. Mercy upon me! what a quantity of poultry had been bought while I was out of my senses. There was in broths only to the amount of twelve pistoles, at least. The other articles were answerable to this. It can't be imagined how much was laid out for wood, candles, water, and brooms. Nevertheless, swelled as this account was, the sum total did not exceed thirty pistoles, consequently there ought to be a remainder of one hundred and eighty. This I represented to her; but the beldame, with an air of devotion, began to take all the saints to witness that there were but fourscore pistoles in the purse when the Count's butler gave her the charge of my portmanteau. "What is that you say, goody? (cried I, with precipitation;) was it the butler who put my things into your hands?" "Without doubt, it was he (she replied) with this token, that when he gave me them, he said, 'Good mother, when Signior Gil Blas is stiff, don't fail to treat him with a good funeral, for there is money enough in the portmanteau to answer the expense.'"

"Ah, damned Neapolitan! (cried I.) I am no longer at a loss to know how my money is gone: you have swept it away, to make yourself some amends for the thefts I hindered you to commit." After this apostrophe, I thanked heaven that the knave had not carried off the whole. Whatever reason I had, however, to accuse the butler of having robbed me, I could not help thinking that the nurse might possibly have done the deed. My suspicion fell sometimes on one, sometimes on the other; but it was still the same thing to me.

I said nothing to the old woman: I did not even cavil at the articles of her unconscionable bill; for I should have got nothing but wrangling; and every one must understand his trade; my resentment, therefore, was contented with paying and dismissing her three days after.

I believe, when she went from me, she advertised the apothecary that she had been dismissed, and that I was well enough to decamp, without taking my leave of him; for a moment after he came to me, quite out of breath, and presented his bill, in which, under names that were utterly unknown to me, although I had been a physician, he had set down all the pretended medicines with which he had furnished me while I was out of my senses. This bill might be justly said to have been written in the true spirit of an apothecary; and accordingly we disputed about the payment of it. I insisted on his abating one half of the sum he demanded: he swore he would not abate one maravedi. Considering, however, that he had to do with a young man who might give him the slip by quitting Madrid that very day, he chose rather to be contented with what I offered, that is, three times the value of his drugs, than to run the risk of losing the whole. I gave him the money with infinite regret, and he retired fully revenged for the small disgrace he had suffered on the day of the clyster.

The physician appeared almost at the same time; for those animals are always at the tail of one another. I paid him for his visits, which had been very numerous, and sent him away very well satisfied. But before he would leave me, in order to prove that he had earned his fees, he related all the mortal symptoms which he had prevented in my distemper: a task performed in very learned terms, and with an agreeable air, though it was altogether above my comprehension. When I had dispatched him, I thought I had got rid of all the ministers of the Fates. But I was mistaken: a surgeon, whom I had never seen, entered my apartment, and having saluted me very respectfully, expressed great joy in seeing me out of danger, a deliverance which (he said) he attributed to two copious bleedings that he had performed and some cupping-glasses which he had the honor to apply. This was another feather to be plucked from my wing: I was fain to pay a tribute to the surgeon also. After so many evacuations, my purse became so feeble, that it was little better than a lifeless corpse, so little of the radical moisture remained.

I began to lose courage, when I saw myself relapsing into

a state of misery. I had, while I served my last masters conceived too great affection for the conveniences of life, and could no longer, as formerly, look upon indigence with the eye of a cynic philosopher. I will own, however, that I was very much in the wrong to let myself fall a prey to melancholy. After having so often experienced that fortune no sooner overthrew than she raised me up again, I ought to have regarded the troublesome situation in which I was, as another introduction to prosperity.

BOOK VIII.

CHAPTER I.

Gil Blas contracts a good acquaintance, and obtains a post that conveys him for Count Galiano's ingratitude. The history of Don Valerio de Luna.

My not having heard of Nunnez all this time surprised me so much, that I concluded he must be in the country; and as soon as I could walk, I went to his lodgings, where I understood that he had actually gone to Andalusia three weeks before, with the Duke de Medina Sidonia. One morning, at waking, Don Melchior de la Ronda came into my head; and remembering that I had promised him, while I was at Grenada, to visit his nephew if ever I should return to Madrid, I resolved to keep my promise that very day. Having got a direction to the house of Don Balhazar de Zuniga, I repaired thither, and asked for Signior Joseph Navarro, who soon appeared. When I saluted him, he received me politely, but coldly, although I had signified my name. I did not know how to reconcile this frozen reception with the character I had heard of this clerk of the kitchen; and was going away with a resolution to save myself the trouble of a second visit, when all of a sudden, assuming an open, smiling air, he cried, with a good deal of emotion, "Ah! Signior Gil Blas de Santillana, pray pardon the reception I have given you. My memory had betrayed my inclination: I had forgot your name, and little thought that you was the cavalier of whom mention is made in a letter which I received from Grenada about four months ago."

"How rejoiced am I to see you! (added he, throwing his arms about my neck with transport.) My uncle Melchior, whom I love and honor as a father, conjures me, if perchance I should have the honor of seeing you, to treat you in the same manner as he has his son; and to employ, if there should be occasion, my own credit, and that of my friends, in your behalf. He has praised the qualities of your head and heart in such terms as would have interested me in your favor, even if I had not been engaged thereto by his recommendation. I beg, therefore, that you will look upon me as a man to whom my uncle has imparted, by letter, all his sentiments with regard to you. I offer you my friendship, and I hope you will not refuse me yours."

I answered with that gratitude which I owed to the polite behavior of Joseph; and, like people of warmth and sincerity, we contracted an intimacy on the spot; and I did not scruple to disclose the situation of my affairs: which he no sooner heard, than he said, "I undertake to procure a place for you; and in the mean time don't fail to come and dine with me every day. You will fare better here than at your eating-house." The offer was too agreeable to a poor creature, just come out of a fit of illness, who had been used to good living, to be rejected. I accepted the invitation therefore, and recruited so well in that family, that in fifteen days I had the face of a Bernadine monk. Melchior's nephew seemed to make up his pack rarely; but how could it be otherwise? He had three strings to his bow; was at the same time butler, steward, and clerk of the kitchen: besides (our friendship apart), I believe the comptroller of the house and he had a very good understanding together.

I was perfectly recovered, when my friend Joseph, seeing me come in one day to dine as usual, made up to me with a gay air, and said, "Signior Gil Blas, I have a pretty good place in view for you. You must know that the duke of Lerma, prime minister of the Spanish crown, in order to devote himself entirely to affairs of state, intrusts two persons with his own concern. Don Diego de Montester has the care of gathering his rents; and his household expense is managed by Don Rodrigo de Calderona. These two men, in whom he can confide, exercise their employments with absolute authority, without the least dependence on one another. Don Diego usually keeps in his service two stewards to receive the cash; and as I understood this morning that he had dismissed one of them, I have been to ask the place for you. Signior de Montester, who knows me, and of whose friendship I may boast, has granted it, without any difficulty, on my recommendation of your morals and capacity. We will go to his house this afternoon."

We went thither accordingly. I was very graciously received, and installed in the employment of the steward, who had been dismissed. His office consisted in visiting the farms, keeping them in repair, and receiving the rents: in a word, I was concerned in the country estate, and every month gave in my accounts to Don Diego, who examined them with great attention. This was what I wished; although my integrity had been so ill repaid by my late master, I was resolved to continue always in the same path.

One day, having got notice that a fire had happened in the castle of Lerma, and that more than one half of it had been reduced to ashes, I went thither immediately to take an account of the damage; and having informed myself exactly, upon the spot, of all the circumstances of the fire, I composed an ample relation of it, which Montester showed to the duke of Lerma. The minister, notwithstanding the affliction he was in to hear such bad news, was struck with the relation, and could not help asking who was the author. Don Diego not only satisfied him in that particular, but also spoke so much in my favor, that his excellency remembered me six

months after, on the occasion of a story, which I am going to recount, and without which, perhaps, I should never have been employed at court. Here it is:

At that time there lived in the street of the Infantas, an old lady called Inesilla de Cantarilla, whose birth was not certainly known. Some said that she was the daughter of a hie-maker; and others, that her father was a commander of the order of St. Jago. Be that as it will, she was a prodigy. Nature bestowed upon her the singular privilege of charming the male sex during the whole course of her life, which exceeded seventy-five years. She had been idolized by the noblemen of the old court, and saw herself adored by those of the new. Time, that spares not even beauty, had exerted itself upon hers in vain; though he had withered it, he could not deprive her of the power to please: and a noble air, an enchanting wit, and graces that were peculiar to her, made her inspire the men with passion, even in her old age.

One of the duke of Lerma's secretaries, called Don Valerio de Luna, a cavalier of five and twenty, saw Inesilla, and fell in love with her. He declared himself in the most passionate terms, and pursued his prey with all the fury that love and youth can inspire. The lady, who had her reasons for not complying with his wishes, did not know how to moderate his flame. One day, however, thinking she had found the means, she carried the young man into her closet, and pointing to a clock that stood upon a table, "You see (said she) what hour it is—on the same day and hour did I come into the world, seventy-five years ago; and do you really think it becomes one of my age to be engaged in love intrigues? Recall your reason, my child, and stifle those sentiments which are so unsuitable both to you and me." At this sensible advice, the cavalier, who no longer acknowledged the authority of reason, answered the lady with all the impetuosity of a man possessed by the most violent emotions, "Cruel Inesilla! why have you recourse to such frivolous remonstrances? Do you imagine that they can change you in my eyes? Don't flatter yourself with such a vain hope. While you are such as I behold you, or while my view is fascinated by the charm, I cannot cease to love you."

"Well then (said she), since you are so obstinate as to persist in the resolution of fatiguing me with your addresses, my house shall be no longer open to you. I forbid you to come near it, and desire to see you no more." You will, perhaps, believe after this, that Don Valerio, disconcerted at what he had heard, made an honorable retreat. On the contrary, he became still more importunate. Love produces the same effects in its votaries as wine does in drunkards. The cavalier begged, sighed, and making a sudden transition from entreaties to rage, attempted to enjoy by force what he could not otherwise obtain. But the lady resisting with courage, cried, with an air of indignation, "Hold, rash wretch! I will soon bridle your impetuous ardor. Know that you are my son." Don Valerio was confounded at these words, which suspended the violence of his passion. But inquiring that Inesilla spoke thus only to be rid of his solicitations, he answered, "You have invented that fable to elude my desires." "No, no, (said she, interrupting him,) I reveal a mystery, which I should always have concealed had not you reduced me to the necessity of disclosing it. Six and twenty years ago, I was in love with Don Pedro de Luna, your father, who was then governor of Segovia, and you became the fruit of our mutual passion. He owned you for his son, gave you good education; and although he had not been without other children, your good qualities would have determined him to leave you a fortune. I, for my part, did not forsake you; as soon as you began to appear in the world, I allured you to my house, in order to inspire you with that polite behavior which is so necessary to a gallant man, and which women can only bestow. I did more; I employed all my credit to introduce you into the prime minister's service. In short, I have interested myself for you, as I ought to do for a son. After this declaration, take your own measures. If you can purify your sentiments, and look upon me only as a mother, I do not banish you from my sight, but will treat you with all the tenderness I have hitherto preserved; but if you are incapable of that effort, which both nature and reason demand, fly this moment, and deliver me from the horror of your presence."

While Inesilla spoke in this manner, Don Valerio remained in profound silence. He seemed to recall his virtue, and endeavor to vanquish himself; but he meditated another design, and prepared a quite different spectacle for his mother. Being unable to console himself for the insurmountable obstacle that opposed his wishes, he basely yielded to his despair: he drew his sword, and plunged it in his own bosom; punishing himself like another Edipus; with this difference, that the Theban plucked out his own eyes, out of grief for having committed the crime; whereas the Castilian stabbed himself, because he could not commit it. The unhappy Don Valerio did not die immediately of the blow he had given himself: but had time to repent, and ask pardon of heaven for having taken away his own life. As he lay, by his death, a vacancy in the post of secretary to the duke of Lerma, that minister, who had not forgot my account of the fire, nor the good character he had heard of me, chose me to fill the place of this young gentleman.

CHAPTER II.

Gil Blas is presented to the duke of Lerma, who receives him into the number of his secretaries; sets him to work, and is satisfied with his performance.

MONTESE was the person who informed me of this agreeable news, and said, "Friend Gil Blas, though I feel some regret in losing you, I love you too well not to be overjoyed at your succeeding Don Valerio. You will not fail to make a fine fortune, provided you follow two pieces of advice which

I have to give you. The first is, to appear so much attached to his excellency, that he shall never doubt of your being entirely devoted to his will. And the second is, to make your court to Signor Don Rodrigo de Calderona; for that man moulds the mind of his master like wax. If you have the good fortune to acquire the good-will of that favorite secretary, you will go a great way in a very little time."

"Signor (said I to Don Diego, after having thanked him for his good advice), tell me, if you please, Don Rodrigo's character. I have often heard him spoke of, and represented bad enough; but I have not much confidence in the pictures which people draw of those who have posts at court; though sometimes, I believe, they do not judge amiss. Pray, tell me then, what do you think of Signor Calderona?" "You ask me a very delicate question, (replied the overseer, with a satirical smile;) I would tell any body but you, without hesitation, that he is a very honorable gentleman, of an unblemished character. But I will deal more frankly with you; for besides that I believe you a young man of discretion, I think it my duty to talk openly to you of Don Rodrigo, since I have advised you to cultivate him with care; otherwise I should only oblige you by halves."

"You must know then, that from a simple domestic of his excellency, when he was only Don Francis de Sandoval,* this man has arrived, by degrees, at the post of his first secretary. There never was a prouder man; he looks upon himself as the duke of Lerma's colleague; and, at bottom, he may be said to share with him the authority of prime minister, since he bestows posts and governments on whom he pleases to oblige. This the public often murmurs at; but he gives himself no trouble about the matter: provided an affair yields him a handsome present, he bids defiance to censure. You will easily conceive, from what I have said, (added Don Diego,) how you are to behave to such a haughty mortal." "Oh yes! (said I,) leave that to me. It will be very unlucky indeed, if I cannot gain his favor. When one knows the foibles of a person whom he wishes to please, he must be no conjurer if he fails of success." "Well then (replied Montese), I will now present you to the duke of Lerma."

We went immediately to the house of that minister, whom we found giving audience in a great hall, where there was more company than at court. Here I saw commanders and knights of Calatrava and St. Jago, soliciting for governments and vice-royalties; bishops, who, being sickly at their own dioceses, desired to be made archbishops only for the change of air; and some holy fathers, of the order of St. Dominic and St. Francis, who laid claim to the mitre with great humility. I likewise observed some half-pay officers, who acted the same part that captain Chunchilla had formerly performed, that is, spent all they had in dancing attendance for a pension. If the duke did not gratify all their desires, he at least received their petitions with great affability; and I perceived that he answered very politely to those who spoke to him.

We waited patiently, until he had dispatched all these supplicants: then Don Diego said to him, "My lord, here is Gil Blas de Santillana, that young man whom your excellency has chosen to supply the place of Don Valerio." At these words the duke, casting his eyes upon me, said, in a very obliging manner, "That I had already merited it by the services I had done him." He afterwards carried me into his closet, to discourse with me in private, or rather, judge of my understanding by my conversation. He desired to know who I was, and the life I had hitherto led, exacting of me a sincere narration of the whole. What a detail was this for me to give! There was no thinking of telling lies before a prime minister of Spain. On the other hand, I had so many things to tell at the expense of my vanity, that I could not resolve on a general confession. How should I extricate myself from this embarrassment? I took the resolution of embellishing the truth in those parts where it would have offended in its nakedness; but he did not fail to discover it, in spite of all my skill. "Monsieur de Santillana, (said he, with a smile, when I had finished my story,) I see you have been in your time a little upon the picaresque." I answered, with a blush, "Your excellency ordered me to be sincere, and I have obeyed." "I am obliged to thee for it, (he replied;) go, my child, thou hast come off very cheaply. I am astonished that thou hast not done by ill example. There are many honest people who would have turned great rogues had fortune put them to the same trials."

"Friend Santillana, (continued the minister,) forget thy past life; and remember that thou now belongest to the king, in whose service thou wilt be employed for the future. Follow me, and I will make thee acquainted with the nature of thy office." He carried me into a little closet adjoining to his own, where I saw, upon shelves, twenty thick registers in folio. "It is here (said he) where thou must work. These registers compose a dictionary of all the noble families within the kingdoms and principalities of the Spanish monarchy. Every book contains, in alphabetical order, the abridged history of every gentleman; in which are recounted the services which he and his ancestors have performed to the state, as well as the affairs of honor in which they have been engaged. There is also mention made of their fortune, their morals, and, in a word, of all their good and bad qualities: so that, when they come to solicit favors at court, I see, with one glance of my eye, whether or not they deserve them. That I may have an exact information of all these things, I have pensionaries every where, who take care to get good intelligence, which they transmit to me in writing; but as their

memorials are often diffuse, and stuffed with provincial modes of expression, they must be rendered more concise, and the diction polished; because his majesty sometimes orders these registers to be read to him. In this work, which requires a perspicuous style, I will employ thee this very moment."

So saying, he took out of a portfolio, full of papers, a memorial, which he put into my hand; and went out of my closet, leaving me at liberty to perform my coup d'essai. I read the piece, which seemed not only stuffed with barbarous terms, but even filled with indecent passion; though it had been composed by a monk in the town of Solsona. He there tore to pieces, without mercy, a good Catalonian family; and God knows if he spoke truth: it looked so much like a scandalous libel, that I at first made some scruple of working upon it; being afraid of making myself an accomplice in the calumny. Nevertheless, novice as I was at court, I went on, at the hazard of his reverence's soul; and placing all the iniquity, if there was any in the case, to his account, began to dishonor, in good Castilian phrases, two or three generations of honest men, perhaps.

I had already finished four or five pages, when the duke, impatient to know how I performed, returned and said, "Santillana, show me what thou hast done, for I long to see it: at the same time throwing his eyes upon my work, he read the beginning with great attention; and seemed so well satisfied, that I was surprised at his commendation. "Prepossessed as I was in thy favor (said he), I confess thou hast surpassed my expectation: thou writest not only with all the clearness and distinction that I desired, but thy style is also spirited and easy: thou justifyest the choice I have made of thy pen, and consolest me for the loss of thy predecessor." He would not have confined my eulogium to this, had he not been interrupted by the arrival of his nephew the Count de Lemos, whom his excellency embraced several times, and received in such a manner as gave me to understand that he loved him with a tender affection. They shut themselves up together, to talk in private of a family affair, which I shall have occasion to mention in the sequel; and with which the minister, at that time, seemed to be more engrossed than with the business of the king.

While they were engaged together, I heard the clock strike twelve; and as I knew that the secretaries and clerks sought their offices at that hour, to go and dine somewhere, I left my performance, and went out, not with a view of going to Montese's house, for he had already paid my appointments, and I had taken my leave of him, but to the most famous ordinary at the court end of the town: a common eating-house would not now serve my turn. Remember that thou now belongest to the king. These words, which the duke had pronounced, were seeds of ambition that every instant sprung up in my soul.

CHAPTER III.

He learns that his post is not altogether without mortifications. His uneasiness at this piece of news, which obliges him to alter his conduct.

I WAS at great pains, when I entered, to let the landlord know that I was secretary to the prime minister; and, in that quality, I did not know what to order for my dinner: I was afraid of bespeaking something that might savour of parsimony, and therefore bade him dress what he himself should think proper. Accordingly he regaled me in a sumptuous manner, and I was served with marks of respect, which gave me still more pleasure than the good cheer. When the bill was brought, I threw a pistole upon the table, leaving to the waiters one fourth of it at least; for so much remained over and above the reckoning. After which I strutted away with such gestures as showed that I was mighty well pleased with my own person.

About twenty yards from hence, there was a large house, in which noblemen that were strangers commonly lodged. Here I hired an apartment, consisting of five or six rooms handsomely furnished, as if I already enjoyed two or three thousand ducats a-year; and even paid the first month per advance. Afterwards, returning to work, I spent the whole afternoon in continuing what I had begun in the morning. There were two more secretaries in a closet next to mine; but they only transcribed what the duke gave them to copy. With these I contracted an acquaintance that every evening when we went out together; and in order to gain their friendship the sooner, carried them to my tavern, where I ordered for supper the best dishes in season, with the most delicate wines.

We sat down together, and began to converse with more gaiety than wit; for, to do justice to my guests, I soon perceived that they did not owe to their genius the places which they possessed. They were connoisseurs, indeed, in the different kinds of hand-writing; but they had not the least tincture of university education.

To make amends for this, they understood their own little interest to admiration; and were not so much intoxicated with the honor of serving the prime minister, but that they complained of their situation. "We have (said one of them,) already exercised our employment five months at our own expense, without touching one farthing; and, which is worse, our appointments are not regulated; nor do we know upon what footing we are." "As for my part (said the other), I would with all my heart put up with twenty stripes, instead of appointments, to be allowed the liberty of engaging myself elsewhere; for I dare not retire on my own accord, nor demand my dismissal, after the secrets with which I have been intrusted; else I might chance to visit the tower of Segovia or castle of Alcañiz."

"How do you make shift to live then?" (said I to them;) I suppose you have fortunes of your own." They answered they had very little money; but, luckily for them, they lodged

* Francis de Roxas de Sandoval, cardinal and duke of Lerma, grandee of Spain, by three several claims, was chief favorite and prime minister to Philip the Third, whom he governed with absolute power many years, but was at last disgraced, October 4, 1618, and died seven years after, in his return unto Valladolid.

† Pícaro, a Spanish word signifying rogue.

at the house of an honest widow, who gave them credit for their board, at the rate of one hundred pistoles a-year from each. All this discourse, of which I did not lose one word, dissipated in an instant the fumes of my pride: I concluded that no more consideration would be paid to me than to others; consequently, I had no cause to be so much charmed with my post, which was not quite so substantial as I had imagined; and that, in short, I could not be too frugal of my purse. These reflections cured me of my extravagance. I began to repent of having invited my fellow-secretaries; wished the repast at an end; and when the bill was brought, disputed with the landlord on every article.

My friends and I parted at midnight, because I did not press them to stay longer. They went home to their widow, and I to my superb apartment, which I was now mad with myself for having hired; and which I firmly resolved to leave at the month's end. It was to no purpose for me to lie down on a good bed; my anxiety banished all repose; and I passed the night in contriving means of being paid by my majesty for my work. I stuck, on this occasion, to Montese's advice, and rose with a resolution of going to pay my respects to Don Rodrigo de Calderona. I was in a very proper disposition to appear before such a proud man, because I found I had occasion for his protection.

I repaired then to the secretary, whose lodging communicated with that of the duke of Lerma, and even equalled it in magnificence: by the furniture, it would have been a difficult matter to distinguish the master from the man. I sent in my name, as the successor of Don Valerio; but, for all that, I waited in the anti-chamber upwards of an hour. "Mr. New Secretary (said I to myself at this juncture), have a little patience, if you please: I find you must dance attendance yourself, before you make other people do so." The chamber-door being opened at length, I entered, and advanced towards Don Rodrigo, who, having just finished a billet-doux to his charming Sirena, was putting it into Pedrillo's hands. I had never appeared before the Archbishop of Grenada, the Count Galiano, nor even the prime minister, so respectfully as I presented myself to the eyes of Signor de Calderona, whom I saluted with a bow to the very ground, begging his protection in such submissive terms, that I cannot remember them without a blush. My meanness would have turned to my prejudice, in the opinion of a real gentleman; but he was pleased with my groveling behavior, and assured me, obligingly enough, that he would let slip no opportunity of doing me service.

I thanked him with great demonstrations of zeal for his favorable sentiments of me; and having vowed eternal attachment to him, took my leave for fear of incommoding him; and begged he would excuse me if I had interrupted him in his important affairs. As soon as I had acted this mean part, I went to my office, where I finished the task which had been imposed. The Duke, who did not fail to come thither in the morning, was no less pleased with the end than he had been with the beginning of my work; and said, "This is extremely well: write as well as thou canst this abridged history in the register of Catalonia: after which thou shalt take another information out of the portfolio, and manage it in the same manner." I had a pretty long conversation with his excellency, and was charmed with his sweetness and familiarity of behavior. What a difference was there between him and Calderona! They were two figures strongly contrasted.

I dined that day in an eating-house for a moderate expense; and resolved to go thither incognito every evening, until I should see the effect of my complaisance and servility. I had money sufficient to maintain me three months, during which I resolved to work at a venture; proposing, as the shortest follies are the least prejudicial, to abandon the court and all its tinsel, if I should receive no salary before the expiration of that term. This, therefore, was my plan. I spared nothing, during two months, to please Calderona; but he took so little notice of my endeavors, that, despairing of success, I changed my conduct towards him; and exerted myself wholly in profiting by those moments of conversation which I had with the duke.

CHAPTER IV.

Gil Blas gains the favor of the Duke of Lerma, who intrusts him with a secret of great importance.

ALTHOUGH his Grace, to use the expression, only just appeared before me, and vanished again, every day, I insensibly rendered myself so agreeable to his excellency, that he said to me one afternoon, "Heark'e, Gil Blas, I like thy disposition and understanding, and have a regard for thee accordingly. Thou art a zealous, faithful young fellow, extremely intelligent and discreet; so that I don't think I shall misplace my confidence if I bestow it upon thee." I threw myself on my knees when I heard these words; and after having respectfully kissed one of his hands, which he held out to raise me up, answered, "Is it possible, then, that your excellency can deign to honor me with such extraordinary favor? What secret enemies will your goodness raise up against me! But there is only one man whose hatred I dread, and that is Don Rodrigo de Calderona."

"Thou hast nothing to apprehend from that quarter (replied the Duke): I know Calderona; he has been attached to me from his infancy; and I may venture to say his sentiments are conformable to mine, that he caresses those whom I love, and hates those who disoblige me: instead of dreading his aversion, thou mayest, on the contrary, depend upon his friendship." By this I could plainly perceive that Signor Don Rodrigo was a cunning rogue, who had got possession of his excellency's soul; and that I could not be too cautious with him. "To begin (added the Duke) with putting thee in possession of my confidence, I

will disclose to thee a design which I have projected; for it is necessary that thou shouldst be informed of it, that thou mayest acquit thyself the better of the commissions in which I intend to employ thee. I have a long time beheld my authority in general respected, my decisions blindly followed, and commissions, employments, governments, viceroynalties, and benefices, disposed of according to my wish. I may be said to reign in Spain; and it is impossible to push my fortune farther; but I would secure it against the storms that begin to threaten me; and, for that effect, want to have my nephew, the Count de Lemos, for my successor in the ministry."

Here the Duke, observing that I was extremely surprised at what I heard, said: "I see your surprise, Santillane: you think it very strange that I should prefer my nephew to my own son, the Duke d'Uzeda; but you must know, that this last has too narrow a genius to fill my place: besides, I am his enemy: he has found the secret of being agreeable to the king, who wants to make him his favorite; and this is what I cannot bear. The favor of a sovereign is like the possession of a woman whom we adore: a piece of happiness of which we are so jealous, that we cannot resolve to share it with a rival, however connected to us by the ties of blood and friendship."

"I now disclose to thee (continued his Grace), the very bottom of my soul. I have already attempted to ruin the Duke d'Uzeda with his majesty; and as I could not succeed, I have changed my battery. I design that the Count de Lemos shall insinuate himself into the good graces of the Prince of Spain. Being gentleman of his bed-chamber, he has an opportunity of talking with him every moment; and besides that he does not want wit, I know a sure method for him to succeed in that enterprise. By this stratagem, I will oppose my nephew to my son, and breed a division between the two cousins, which will oblige them both to court my support, the awe of which will keep them submissive to my will. This (added he) is my scheme; and thy assistance will be very serviceable to me: for I will always send thee to the Count de Lemos, and thou shalt report from him whatever he shall have occasion to impart."

After this confidence, which I regarded as ready money, I no longer felt any disquiet. "At length (said I to myself) I am under the spout; a shower of gold will certainly rain upon me; for it is impossible but that the confidant of the man, who, by way of excellence, is called the great pillar of the Spanish monarchy, should be in a very short time loaded with wealth." Full of such agreeable hope, I saw with indifference my poor purse giving up the ghost.

CHAPTER V.

Gil Blas is overwhelmed with joy, honor, and distress.

THE minister's affection for me was soon perceived; for he affected to give marks of it in public, giving me the charge of his portfolio, which he used to carry in his own hand to council. This novelty, making people look upon me as a small favorite, excited the envy of several persons; and was the occasion of my receiving a great deal of court holy water. My two neighbors, the secretaries, were not the last in complimenting me upon my approaching greatness; and they invited me to sup at their widow's, not so much in return for my treat, as with a view to engage me in their behalf for the future. I was welcomed every where; even the haughty Don Rodrigo changed his behavior to me, and now called me nothing but Signor de Santillane; though, before that, he only favored me with You, always omitting the term Signor. He loaded me with civilities, especially when he thought our patron might observe him: but I assure you he had no fool to deal with; I answered all his kindness with equal politeness; and the more so, the more I hated him in my heart: an old courtier could not have excelled me in this particular.

I likewise accompanied my Lord Duke to court, whether he commonly went three times a-day. In the morning, he entered his majesty's bed-chamber as soon as he was awake; and, kneeling by the bedside, discoursed of those things that were to be done in the day; having also dictated to his master what was to be said, he retired; and returned immediately after dinner, not to talk on state affairs, but to converse on entertaining subjects, and regale the king with all the merry adventures which happened in Madrid, and of which he was always very early informed. Last of all, he visited him for the third time in the evening, when he gave such an account as he thought proper of what he had done through the day, and in a careless manner asked his majesty's orders for to-morrow. While he was with the king, I remained in the anti-chamber, where I saw people of quality, devoted to the idol Favor, court my conversation, and think themselves happy if I entered into discourse with them. How, after this, could I help thinking myself a man of consequence! There are a great many at court who have the same opinion of themselves, upon a much more slender foundation.

One day, I had still more food for my vanity; the King, to whom the Duke had spoke very advantageously of my style, was very curious to see a specimen of it. Upon which, his excellency made me take up the Catalonian register, and carrying me into the presence, ordered me to read the first story which I had abridged. If I was at first disturbed by the presence of the Prince, I was soon composed by that of the minister; and read my performance, which his majesty heard with pleasure. He expressed his satisfaction, and even recommended me to the minister's protection. This did not at all diminish the pride of my heart; and the conversation which I had a few days after with the Count de Lemos quite filled my head with the ideas of ambition. I went to this nobleman from his uncle, and finding him at the Prince's court, presented to him a letter of credentials; in which the

Duke told him that he might open himself to me, as to one who was perfectly well acquainted with their design, and chosen by him as their common messenger. The Count, having read this billet, conducted me into a room, and having locked the door, spoke in this manner: "Since you enjoy the confidence of the duke of Lerma, I don't doubt that you deserve it; and I ought to make no difficulty in giving you mine also. You must know then, that matters go on swimmingly. The Prince of Spain distinguishes me from all the noblemen who are personally attached to him, and who study to please him. I had this morning a private conversation with him, in which he seemed chagrined at seeing himself, through the king's avarice, unable to follow the dictates of his generous heart, or even to spend like a prince. On this occasion I did not fail to lament his situation; and profiting by the opportunity, promised to bring a thousand pistoles to him at his levee to-morrow, as an earnest of greater sums which I have undertaken to furnish him with in a very little time. He was charmed with my promise; and I am certain of captivating his favor if I keep my word. Go and tell these circumstances to my uncle, and return in the evening to inform me of his sentiments of the matter."

I quitted the Count de Lemos immediately, and went back to the Duke of Lerma, who, on my report, sent to Calderona for a thousand pistoles, which he gave me to carry in the evening to the Count. This I performed; saying to myself, "Oho! I now see plainly what the infallible method is which the minister takes to succeed in his enterprise: upon my soul! he is in the right; and, to all appearance, these prodigalities will not ruin his fortune: I can easily guess from those coffers these pistoles are taken; but, after all, it is but reasonable that the father should maintain the son." The Count de Lemos, when we parted, said softly, "Farewell, dear confidant: the Prince of Spain is a little amorous: you and I must have a conference on that subject one of these days: I foresee that I shall have occasion for your dexterity very soon." I came home musing on these words, which were not at all ambiguous, and which filled me with joy. "The devil! (said I), I am just on the eve of becoming Mercury to the heir of the kingdom." I did not examine into the goodness or badness of the office: the quality of the gallant laid my virtue asleep. What glory was it for me to be made minister of pleasure to a great prince! "Softly, Mr. Gil Blas, (some folks will say,) the business was not to make you deputy-minister." I own it: but at bottom the honor of both these posts is equal, the difference lies in the profits only.

While I executed these noble commissions, advancing every day farther and farther in the good graces of the prime minister, with such enchanting hopes, how happy should I have been, if ambition had secured me from the cravings of hunger! More than two months had elapsed since I had quitted my magnificent apartment, and hired a small chamber very frugally furnished. Although this gave me some pain, as I came out early in the morning, and did not go home to bed before night, I bore my fortune patiently. The whole day I appeared upon my theatre, that is, in the Duke's house, and played the part of a man of consequence; but when I had crept up into my garret, my importance vanished, and nothing remained but poor Gil Blas without money; and, which is worse, without any thing that could fetch it. Though I had not been too proud to discover my necessity to any body, I did not know one person that could assist me, except Navarro, whom I had neglected so much since I turned courtier, that I had not assurance enough to make application to his friendship. I had been obliged to sell all my clothes piecemeal, except those for which I had absolute occasion. I went no more to the eating-house, because I had not wherewithal to pay my ordinary. How did I make shift then to subsist? Every morning, a little bread and wine was brought into our offices for breakfast: this was all that the minister allowed: this was all I ate through the day; and I generally went supperless to bed.

Such was the situation of a man who shone at court, and who was more properly an object of compassion than envy. Nevertheless, I could no longer sustain the weight of my misery; and at length determined to disclose it, with address, to the Duke of Lerma, as soon as an opportunity should offer. Happily for me I found an occasion at the Escorial,* whether the King and the Prince repaired, some days after I had come to this resolution.

CHAPTER VI.

The manner in which Gil Blas informs the duke of Lerma of his necessity, and that minister's behavior on the occasion.

WHILE the King was at the Escorial, he defrayed the expense of every body; so that there I did not feel where the shoe pinched: I lay in a wardrobe, just by the bed-chamber of the Duke; who one morning, rising as usual at break of day, made me take some papers and a standish, and follow him into the palace garden. We went and sat down under a tuft of trees, where I put myself, by his order, into the posture of a man writing on the crown of his hat; while he held in his hand a paper which he pretended to read; so that, at a distance, we seemed busy in very serious affairs, though all the while we talked of nothing but trifles.

For the space of an hour, I had diverted his excellency with all the sallies that my good humor could afford, when two magpies, perching on the trees under which we sat, began to chatter in such a noisy manner as attracted our at-

* Escorial, a royal palace about six leagues from Madrid, built by Philip the Second, king of Spain; who in his lifetime expended no less than 5,270,000 ducats in finishing and adorning this magnificent work. Here too is a chapel, in which are the tombs of all the Spanish monarchs, from Charles V. to the present time.

attention. "These birds (said the Duke) seem to scold one another: I should be very glad to know the cause of their quarrel." "My lord (said I), your curiosity puts me in mind of an Indian fable, which I have read in Pilpay or some other author of that kind." The minister desired to hear it, and I recounted it in these words.

"Heretofore a good monarch reigned in Persia, whose genius being not quite extensive enough to govern his kingdom of himself, he left that care to his grand vizier, Atalmuc; a man of superior capacity, who supported the weight of that vast monarchy without stooping, and maintained it in profound peace. He had even the art of making the royal authority loved as well as feared; and the subjects enjoyed an affectionate father in a vizier, who was faithful to his prince. Atalmuc had, among his secretaries, a young Cachemirian called Zeangir, whom he loved more than all the others. He took pleasure in his conversation, carried him in his company to the chase, and even disclosed to him his most secret thoughts. One day, while they hunted together in a wood, the vizier seeing two ravens croaking on a tree, said to his secretary, 'I wish I knew what these birds are talking of in their language.' 'Signior (answered the Cachemirian), your wish may be accomplished.' 'How can that be?' (replied Atalmuc.) 'A cabalistical dervise (said Zeangir) taught me the language of birds. If you please, I will listen to these, and repeat to you verbatim every thing that I shall hear.'

"The vizier consented: and the Cachemirian approaching the ravens, seemed to lend an attentive ear to their discourse: after which, returning to his master; 'Signior (said he), would you believe it? we are the subject of their conversation.' 'Impossible!' (cried the Persian minister), what can they say of us?' 'One of them (replied the secretary) said, Behold the grand vizier Atalmuc in person, that tutelary eagle, who covers Persia like a nest with his wings, and incessantly watches for its preservation. As a relaxation from his painful toils, he hunts in this wood with his faithful Zeangir. How happy is that secretary in serving a master that has so much affection for him!' 'Softly,' (said the other raven), softly; do not too much extol the happiness of that Cachemirian; Atalmuc, it is true, converses familiarly with him, honors him with his confidence, and I don't doubt, intends to give him a considerable post: but before that happens, Zeangir will die of hunger. That poor devil lodges in a small paltry room, where he is in want of the common necessities of life. In a word, he lives in a miserable manner, though nobody at court perceives it. The grand vizier never thinks of inquiring into his circumstances; but, content with entertaining favorable sentiments in his behalf, leaves him, in the mean time, a prey to poverty."

Here I left off speaking, in order to observe the Duke, who asked with a smile, what impression the apologue made on the mind of Atalmuc, and if the grand vizier was not offended at the presumption of his secretary. "No, my lord, (said I, in great confusion at this question,) the fable says, that, on the contrary, he loaded him with favors." "That was lucky," (replied the Duke, with a serious air;) some ministers would not like to be so schooled. But (added he, breaking off the discourse, and getting up,) I believe the King will soon be awake, and my duty obliges me to be near him." So saying, he walked hastily towards the palace, without speaking another word, and very ill pleased, as I imagined, with the Indian fable.

I followed him to the very door of his majesty's bed-chamber; after which, I went and put the papers into the place from whence I had taken them, and then entered the closet where our two copying secretaries were at work; for they were also along with us. "What is the matter with you, Signior de Sanillane?" (said they, when they saw me;) you seem very much disturbed. Has any disagreeable accident happened to you?"

I was too much affected with the bad success of my apology to conceal my grief: I recounted to them what I had said to the Duke; and they expressed their sympathy in the sharp affliction with which I was seized. "You have great reason to be grieved, (said one of them;) I wish you may be better treated than the secretary of Cardinal Spinoia, who, tired with having received nothing during fifteen months in which he was employed by his eminence, took the liberty, one day, of representing his necessity, and craving some money for his subsistence. 'It is but just (said the minister) that you should be paid. Here, (added he, giving him an order for a thousand ducats,) go and receive that sum from the royal treasury; but remember, at the same time, that I have no further occasion for your service.' The secretary would have consoled himself for his dismissal, had he touched his thousand ducats, and been allowed to seek for business elsewhere; but, just as he went out of the cardinal's house, he was arrested by an alguazil, and conducted to the tower of Segovia, where he has been prisoner a long time."

This touch of history redoubled my fear: I believed myself undone; and becoming inconsolable, began to reproach my own impatience, as if I had not suffered enough. "Alas! (said I,) why did I risk that unlucky fable which has displeased the minister? perhaps he was just on the point of executing me out of my miserable situation—nay, perhaps I was on the eve of making one of those sudden fortunes which astonish mankind. What riches! what honors have I lost by my own folly! I ought to have considered that great men don't choose to be anticipated, but desire that the least gratifications they are obliged to give should be received as their own free grace and favor. It would have been better for me to continue my slender regimen, without complaining to the Duke, and even to let myself die of hunger, by which means the blame would have lain on his side."

If I had even preserved the sparks of hope, my master, whom I saw in the afternoon, would have banished them en-

tirely; he was very serious with me, contrary to custom, and scarce spoke at all; a circumstance that threw me into mortal disquiet for the rest of the day: neither did I pass the night in more tranquillity; my sorrow for seeing all my agreeable illusions vanish, and the dread of increasing the number of state prisoners, made me groan and lament my condition till morning.

The next day was the crisis of my fate. The Duke ordered me to be called in the morning, and I entered his chamber trembling like a criminal who is going to receive sentence. "Sanillane, (said he, showing a paper which he held in his hand,) take this order."—I quaked at the word Order, saying to myself, "Oh heaven! behold Cardinal Spinoia! the carriage is ready for Segovia." The terror which seized me was such, that I interrupted the minister, and throwing myself at his feet, "My lord, (said I, all in tears,) I most humbly beg that your excellency will pardon my presumption: it was necessity alone that compelled me to disclose my situation."

The Duke, who could not help laughing at my disorder, answered, "Be comforted, Gil Blas, and listen to what I am going to say: Although the discovering thy necessities was a reproach to me for not having prevented them, I am not at all disabused, my friend: I am rather angry with myself for having omitted to ask how thou livest. But, to begin with making amends for this inattention, I give thee this order for fifteen hundred ducats, which will be paid upon sight, out of the royal treasury. This is not all; I promise thee the same sum annually, and besides, when people of wealth and generosity solicit thy interest, I do not forbid thee to speak in their behalf."

In the ecstasy occasioned by these words, I kissed the feet of the minister, who, having commanded me to rise, continued to discourse with me in a familiar manner. I attempted to recall my good-humor; but I could not make such a sudden transition from grief to joy; I was as much confounded as a wretch who is informed of his pardon in the very minute when he expected his execution. My master ascribed all this agitation to the fear of having incurred his displeasure, though the dread of perpetual imprisonment had no less a share in my discomposure. He confessed that he had affected coolness towards me, to see whether or not I should be afflicted at the change; that from this he was convinced of my sincere attachment to his person, for which he loved me the more.

CHAPTER VII.

The good use to which he put his fifteen hundred ducats; the first affair in which he intermeddled, and the profit from thence accruing.

THE King, as if he had intended to gratify my impatience, returned the very next day to Madrid; upon which I flew instantly to the royal treasury, where I immediately touched the sum contained in my order. I now listened to nothing but my vanity and ambition: I abandoned my miserable room to those secretaries who are still ignorant of the language of birds, and once more hired my fine apartment, which was luckily untenanted. I sent for a famous tailor, who worked for almost all the beaux; he took my measure, and carried me to a shop where he took off five ells of cloth, which (he said) was barely sufficient to make a suit for me. Five ells for a suit of a Spanish taste! just heaven!—but let us spare our censure. Tailors of reputation always use more than others. I then bought some linen, which I wanted very much, silk stockings, and a beaver faced with point d'Espagne. This being done, I thought it would not look well for me to be without a lacquey, and desired Vincent Forero, my landlord, to accommodate me with one of his own recommendation. Most of the strangers who lodged with him used, on their arrival at Madrid, to take Spanish valets into their service, by which means his house was the rendezvous of all the lacques out of place. The first that presented himself was a young fellow of such a soft, devout appearance, that I would have nothing to do with him; he looked too much like Ambrose de Laredo. "I don't want (said I to Forero) a valet of such a religious deportment; I have been already bit by such another." Scarce had I dismissed this lacquey, when another came in, of a very sprightly appearance, as impudent as a court page, with something roughish in his looks. Pleased with his outside, I put some questions to him, which he answered with spirit. I observed that he was of an intriguing disposition, and looking upon him as a subject put for my purpose, engaged him immediately. I had no cause to repent of my choice: nay, I perceived, in a very little time, that I had made an admirable acquisition. As the Duke had permitted me to speak to him in favor of people whom I wanted to serve (and I was resolved not to neglect this permission), I had occasion for a jackal to discover the game; that is, an industrious pleasant fellow, proper to find out and allure those who had favors to ask of the prime minister. This office was quite the masterpiece of Scipio (such was my lacquey's name), who had been in the service of Donna Anna de Guevera, nurse to the Prince of Spain, where he had exercised that talent to some purpose.

As soon as he understood my credit, and that I should be glad to use it to the best advantage, he went to work, and that very day said to me, "Signior, I have made a pretty good discovery: a young gentleman of Grenada, called Don Roger de Rada, is come to Madrid on an affair of honor, which obliges him to solicit the Duke of Lerma's protection, and he is willing to pay well for the favor he shall obtain; I have already spoke with him, and found him desirous of applying to Don Rodrigo de Calderona, whose power he had heard greatly extolled: but I have changed his intention, by assuring him that Calderona sells his good offices at an extravagant rate; whereas you content yourself with a mode-

rate gratification for yours, and that you would even employ them gratis, were you in a situation that permitted you to follow your generous and disinterested inclination; in short, I spoke to him in such a manner, as that you will see the gentleman at your levee to-morrow morning." "How! (said I,) Mr. Scipio, you have already done a great deal of work. I perceive that you are no novice in matters of intrigue; and am surprised that you have not made your fortune." "That ought not to surprise you, (he replied;) I love to make money circulate, and never hoard up what I can get."

Don Roger de Rada actually came to my lodgings, and I received him with politeness mixed with pride. "Signior Cavalier, (said I,) before I engage to serve you, I must know the affair of honor that brings you to court; for it may be of such a nature that I dare not speak to the prime minister in your behalf; make, therefore, if you please, a faithful report of it, and be assured that I will enter warmly into your interests, provided a man of honor may espouse them." "With all my heart, (replied the young Grenadine,) I will sincerely recount my story." At the same time he related it as follows.

CHAPTER VIII.

The history of Don Roger de Rada.

DON ANASTASIO de Rada, a Grenadine gentleman, lived happily in the town of Antequera with Donna Estephania his wife, who, together with unblemished virtue, possessed a gentle disposition, and a great share of beauty. If she had a tender affection for her husband, he was also distractedly fond of her, and being naturally addicted to jealousy (though he had not the least cause to suspect her fidelity), was not without inquietude. He was afraid that some secret enemy of his repose made attempts upon his honor; he distrusted all his friends, except Don Huberto de Hordades, who had free access to his house in quality of Estephania's cousin, and who, indeed, was the only man he ought to have suspected.

Don Huberto actually fell in love with his kinswoman, and had presumption enough to declare his passion, without regard to ties of blood or the particular friendship subsisting between him and Anastasio. The lady being a woman of discretion, instead of making a discovery which might have been attended with melancholy consequences, reprimanded her relation with gentleness; represented to him how much he was to blame, in attempting to seduce her and dishonor her husband; and told him very seriously, that he must not flatter himself with the hope of success.

This moderation served only to inflame the cavalier the more, and imagining that he must push things to extremity with a woman of her character, he began to behave very disrespectfully to her, and one day had the audacity to press her to satisfy his desire. She repulsed him with an air of severity, and threatened to make Don Anastasio punish his rashness. The gallant, terrified at this menace, promised to speak no more of his passion, and on the faith of that promise, Estephania pardoned what was past.

Don Huberto, who was naturally a very wicked man, could not behold his love so ill repaid without conceiving a base desire of being revenged. He knew the jealous temper of Don Anastasio to be susceptible of any impression which he had a mind to give; and he needed no more than this intelligence to form the blackest design that ever entered into the heart of a villain. One evening, while he and this weak husband were walking together, by themselves, he said to him with a melancholy air, "My dear friend, I can no longer live without revealing to you a secret which I would have kept for ever from your knowledge, were not your honor dearer to you than your repose; but your delicacy and mine, in point of injuries, permits me not to conceal what passes at your house: prepare to hear a piece of news which will give you as much sorrow as surprise, for I must touch you in the tenderest part."

"I understand you, (said Don Anastasio, already discomposed;) your cousin is unfaithful." "I no longer own her for my cousin (replied Hordades, with an air of indignation), I renounce her: for she is unworthy of such a husband." "Tis too much to make me languish in this manner (cried Don Anastasio); speak; what has Estephania done?" "She has betrayed you, (answered Huberto;) you have a rival, whom she entertains in private: but I know not his name; for the adulterer, by the favor of a dark night, concealed his person from those who observed his retreat. All I know is, that you are deceived: that I am certain of. The concern which I ought to have in this affair but too well verifies my report. Since I declare myself against Estephania, I must be well convinced of her infidelity."

"It is in vain, (added he, observing that his discourse had the desired effect,) it is in vain for me to tell you more. I perceive that you don't deserve the ingratitude with which your love is repaid; and that you meditate just vengeance on the guilty. I will not oppose your design. Never examine who the victim is that you intend to strike; but show to the whole city that there is nothing which you cannot sacrifice to your honor."

The traitor thus animated a too credulous husband against an innocent wife, and painted, in such lively colors, the infamy with which he would be covered if he should leave the injury unpunished, that he grew mad with revenge. Don Anastasio, having lost his judgment, seemed actuated by the furies, and went home with a resolution to stab his unhappy wife, who was just going to bed when he came in. He constrained himself at first, and waited until the servants were withdrawn; then, unrestricted by the fear of heaven's wrath, by the dishonor he was going to reflect upon his family, and even by the natural pity which he ought to have felt for an infant, which his wife had already carried six months in her womb, he approached the victim, saying, in a furious

tone, "Thou must die, wretch! thou hast but a moment to live, and that my generosity allows thee to spend in a prayer to heaven, to pardon the outrage thou hast committed against me: for I would not have thee lose thy soul as thou hast lost thy honor." So saying, he unheeded his poniard. His action and discourse terrified Estephania, who falling at his feet, and clasping her hands, said to him in the utmost astonishment, "What is the matter, Signior! what cause of discontent have I been so unhappy as to give you? Why would you take away the life of your spouse? If you suspect her of infidelity, indeed you are mistaken."

"No, no! (the jealous husband hastily replied,) I am but too well assured of your falsehood: those who informed me are creditable persons. Don Huberto—" "Ah, Signior! (said she, interrupting him with precipitation,) you have reason to distrust Don Huberto. He is less your friend than you imagine: if he has said any thing to the prejudice of my virtue, do not believe him." "Peace, infamous woman! (answered Don Anastasio:) by endeavoring to prejudice me against Hordales, you justify, instead of dissipating, my suspicions. You endeavor to render that relation suspected, because he is informed of your misconduct; you want to invalidate his testimony: but that artifice is in vain, and redoubles my desire of punishing your guilt." "My dear husband! (resumed the innocent Estephania, weeping bitterly,) distrust your own blind rage: if you follow its emotions, you will commit an action which it will not be in your power to atone when once you are convinced of your injustice. In the name of God, quiet your transports: at least give yourself time to clear up your suspicions, and do justice to a wife who has no crime to reproach herself with."

Any other than Anastasio would have been moved by these words, and still more with the affliction of her who pronounced them; but he, cruel man! far from being melted at her distress, once more bid the lady recommend herself quickly to God, and even lifted up his arm to strike. "Hold, barbarian! (cried she,) if I love for me is entirely extinguished; if the marks of tenderness, which I have lavished upon thee, are effaced from thy remembrance; if my tears cannot divert thee from thy execrable design; at least have some regard to thy own blood. Arm not thy frantic hand against an innocent, who has not yet seen the light: thou canst not be its executioner without offending heaven and earth. As for my part, I forgive thee my death: but be assured, the blood of the babe will cry for vengeance on the horrible deed."

Howsoever determined Don Anastasio was to pay no attention to what Estephania might say, he could not help being moved by these dreadful images, which her last words presented to his thought. Wherefore, as if he had been afraid that his emotion would betray his resentment, he hastened to take advantage of the fury that remained in his heart, and plunging his poniard into the right side of his wife, quitted his house immediately, and fled from Antequera.

Meanwhile, the unfortunate lady was so stunned with the blow which she had received, that she lay some minutes on the floor without any signs of life: afterwards, recovering her spirits, she uttered such plaints and lamentations, as brought an old maid-servant into the room. As soon as this good woman saw her mistress in such a piteous condition, she waked the rest of the domestics, and even the neighbors, with her cries. The chamber was soon filled with people; surgeons were called; they examined the wound, and had good hopes of her recovery. They were not mistaken in their conjecture; for, in a little time, they cured Estephania, who was happily delivered, three months after this cruel adventure, of a son (Signior Gil Blas) whom you now see. I am the fruit of that melancholy pregnancy.

Although scandal seldom spares a woman's virtue, it respected that of my mother; and this bloody scene was looked upon in town as the groundless transport of a jealous husband. My father, it is true, was known to be a violent man, very apt to take umbrage without cause. Hordales concluded that his kinswoman suspected him of having disturbed the mind of Don Anastasio with false stories; and satisfied with being, at least, half revenged, left off visiting her. Not to tire you, Sir, I will not enlarge upon the particulars of my education; but only observe, that my mother's principal care was to have me taught to fence; and I accordingly learned that exercise a long time, in the most celebrated schools of Grenada and Seville. She waited with impatience, until I was old enough to measure my sword with that of Don Huberto, before she informed me of the cause she had to complain of me: then, I being in my eighteenth year, she imparted to me the whole story; not without shedding tears in abundance, and appearing affected with the most violent sorrow. What impression must a mother, in that condition, make on a son, who neither wanted courage nor sentiment? I went instantly and challenged Hordales to a private place, where, after a pretty obstinate combat, I ran him through the body in three places, and left him breathless upon the spot.

Don Huberto finding himself mortally wounded, fixed his last looks on me, and said he received the death I had given him as a just punishment for the crime he had committed against the honor of my mother. He confessed that he had resolved upon her destruction, to be revenged of her scorn; and expired, asking pardon of heaven, Don Anastasio, Estephania, and me. I did not think proper to return, in order to inform my mother of what had happened; I left that to fame; and passing the mountains, repaired to Malaga, where I embarked with the captain of a privateer, just ready to sail on a cruise. He thought I did not look like one who wanted courage, and gladly consented that I should join his volunteers.

We soon found an opportunity of signaling ourselves. Near the island of Albouran,* we met a corsair of Melilla,

* Albouran, a small island in the Mediterranean, on the coast

on her return to the coast of Africa, with a Spanish ship richly laden, which she had taken off Carthage. We vigorously attacked the African, and made ourselves masters of both ships, in which we found fourscore Christians, whom they were carrying as slaves to Barbary. Then, taking advantage of a favorable wind that sprung up for the coast of Grenada, we arrived, in a little time, at Punta de Helena.

While we asked the slaves, whom we had delivered, the places of their nativity, I put that question to a man of good mien, who seemed to be about fifty years of age. He answered, with a sigh, that he was from Antequera. I felt a strange emotion at his reply, without knowing wherefore; and he perceiving it, was remarkably disturbed in his turn. "I am (said I) your townsman: may I ask the name of your family?" "Alas! (he replied,) you renew my grief by desiring me to gratify your curiosity. Eighteen years ago I quitted Antequera, where I cannot be remembered without horror: you yourself may, perhaps, have heard of me but too often: my name is Don Anastasio de Rada." "Just heaven! (cried I,) can I believe my senses? What! is this Don Anastasio, my own father, whom I see?" "What is that you say, young man? (cried he, in his turn, looking at me with surprise,) is it possible that you are the unhappy infant which was in its mother's womb when I sacrificed her to my fury?" "Yes, my father, (said I,) I am he whom the virtuous Estephania brought into the world three months after that fatal night on which you left her weeping in her blood."

Don Anastasio, before I had finished these words, fell upon my neck, clasped me in his arms, and, for a whole quarter of an hour we did nothing but mingle our sighs and tears. After having yielded to these tender emotions, that such a meeting could not fail to raise, my father lifted up his eyes, and thanked heaven for having preserved the life of Estephania. But a moment after, as if he had been afraid of giving thanks unseasonably, he asked in what manner the innocence of his wife had been proved? "Signior, (said I,) nobody but you ever doubted it: her conduct was always irreproachable. I will disabuse you: you must know that you was imposed upon by Don Huberto." I then recounted the whole of that relation's perfidy, the vengeance I had taken, and the confession he made at his death. My father was not so much pleased at the recovery of his freedom, as with the news I told.

In the excess of his joy, he began to embrace me again with tenderness and transport; and could not help expressing his satisfaction with regard to my conduct. "Come, my son, (said he,) let us hasten to Antequera. I burn with impatience to throw myself at the feet of a wife, whom I have so unworthily treated. Since you have made me acquainted with my own injustice, my heart is torn with remorse."

I was too eager to bring together persons who were so dear to me, to retard the happy moment: I quitted the privateer, and with my share of the prize we had taken, bought two mules at Adra, my father being unwilling to expose himself again to the dangers of the sea. He had leisure enough on the road to relate his adventures, which I heard with as greedy attention as that which the prince of Ithaca paid to those of the king his father. In short, after having travelled several days, we gained the foot of a mountain, in the neighborhood of Antequera, where we halted; and resolving to go home privately, did not enter the town till midnight.

I leave you to guess the surprise of my mother at the return of a husband whom she thought for ever lost; and the miraculous manner (if I may be allowed the expression) in which he was restored, became another cause for her astonishment. He asked pardon for his barbarity, with such genuine marks of repentance, that she could not help being affected with them; and, instead of regarding him as an assassin, looked upon him as a man to whom heaven had subjected her will; so sacred is the name of husband to a virtuous woman!

Estephania had been so anxious on my account, that she was overjoyed at my return. But her pleasure was not without alloy: the sister of Hordales had begun a criminal process against the murderer of her brother, and caused me to be searched for every where in such a manner, that my mother, knowing how insecure I was at home, suffered great uneasiness, which obliged me to set out that very night for court; where I come, Signior, to solicit my pardon, which I hope to obtain, since you design to speak to the prime minister in my behalf, and to support me with your whole credit.

The valiant son of Don Anastasio here finished his narration; upon which I said to him, with an air of importance, "Enough, Signior Don Roger, the case seems pardonable: I undertake to communicate your affair to his excellency, and I will venture to promise you his protection." The Grenadine, upon this assurance, launched out into a world of thanks, which would only have entered at one ear and gone out at the other, had he not assured me, that whatever service I should do him would be close followed by his acknowledgments. As soon as he touched on that string, I put myself in motion, and that very day recounted his story to the Duke, who having permitted me to introduce the cavalier, said to him, "Don Roger, I am informed of the affair that brought you to court: Santillane has told me every circumstance; make yourself easy: you have done nothing that is not excusable; and it is particularly to those gentlemen who revenge their injured honor that his Majesty loves to show favor. For the sake of form, you must go to prison; but be assured,

you shall not continue in it long. Your friend Santillane will take care of the rest, and soon procure your enlargement."

Don Roger made a profound bow to the minister, on whose word he surrendered himself. His pardon, by my care, was expedited in a very little time; for, in less than ten days, I sent this new Telemachus home to his Ulysses and Penelope; whereas, had he been without a protector, he would not, perhaps, have been quit for a whole year's imprisonment. I touched no more than a hundred pistoles for my good offices: so that it was not a great catch. But I was not yet a Calderona, to despise small matters.

CHAPTER IX.

Gil Blas finds means to make a considerable fortune in a very short time, and gives himself great airs accordingly.

THIS affair quickened my appetite; and ten pistoles which I gave to Scipio, for his right of brokerage, encouraged him to go upon the scent again. I have already extolled his talents in this way: he might have been justly entitled the great Scipio. The second customer he brought was a printer, who, in despite of common sense, had enriched himself by books of knight-errantry. This honest tradesman had pirated a work belonging to another printer, and his edition was seized. For three hundred ducats he obtained, through my means, a replevy, and escaped a large fine. Though the minister, properly speaking, had no business with this affair, his excellency, at my request, was so good as to interpose his authority. After the printer, a merchant passed through my hands, on the following occasion. A Portuguese ship had been taken by a corsair of Barbary, and afterwards retaken by a privateer of Cadiz. Two thirds of the lading belonged to a merchant of Lisbon, who having reclaimed it in vain, came to court in quest of a patron who had credit enough to cause restitution to be made. I interested myself in his behalf, and he got possession of his effects, in consideration of a present which he made me, of four hundred pistoles, for my protection.

Methinks I hear the reader cry in this place, Bravo, Monsieur de Santillane, put hay into your boots; you are in a fine road; push your fortune. Oh! that I will, I warrant you! I see, if I am not mistaken, my valet coming with a new prize, which he has grappled. Right: it is Scipio—let us hear him. "Signior (said he), allow me to introduce this famous operator to you. He wants a patent to sell his medicines, exclusive of all others, during the space of ten years, in all the cities under the dominion of Spain; that is, all persons of his profession shall be prohibited from settling in the place or places where he resides; and he will pay, as an acknowledgment, two hundred pistoles to any person who will procure for him the said privilege." I said to the mountebank, assuming the patron, "Well, friend, your business shall be done." Sure enough, in a very few days I despatched him with patents, which entitled him to cheat the people exclusively, through all the kingdoms of Spain.

Though my wealth increased, I had obtained of his excellency the four favors I had asked so easily, that I never hesitated in requesting a fifth; which was the government of the city of Vera, on the confines of Grenada, for a knight of Calatrava,* who promised me a thousand pistoles for the place. The minister laughed to see me so hot on the game: "Egad, Gil Blas, (said he), you go on at a rare rate: you must be furiously inclined to oblige your neighbors. Heave! I shall not stand upon trifles with you; but when you demand governments, and other considerable favors, you shall, if you please, be contented with one half of the profit, and be accountable for the other to me. You can't imagine (added he) what expense I am obliged to be at, or how many resources I must have to support the dignity of my post: for, notwithstanding the disinterested appearance I assume, I confess I am not imprudent enough to disorder my domestic affairs. Take your measures accordingly."

My master, by this discourse, banishing all fear of being importunate, or rather encouraging me to return frequently to the charge, I became more greedy of riches than ever; and would have willingly advertised, that all those who wanted favors at court should apply to me. I went upon one course, Scipio upon another, in quest of people whom we might serve for money. My knight of Calatrava had his government of Vera for his thousand pistoles; and I soon obtained another at the same price, for a knight of St. Jago.† I was not contented with making governors only; I conferred orders of knighthood, and converted some good plebeians into bad gentlemen, by virtue of excellent letters patent: I bestowed small benefices, canons, and some ecclesiastical dignities. As for the bishoprics and archbishoprics, they were all in the gift of Don Rodrigo de Calderona, who likewise appointed magistrates, commanders, and viceroys. A plain proof that the great places were no better filled than the small ones; for the people we chose to occupy the posts, of which we made such an honorable traffic, were not always the best qualified

* Calatrava, a military order of knighthood in Spain, instituted in the year 1188, during the reign of Sancho the Third, king of Castile. This society has formerly signalized its zeal and courage in many battles against infidels, and is still possessed of fifty-six commanderies and sixteen priories. The habit of the order is a large white mantle, with a red cross on the left side, powdered with flowers de luce. The knights make a vow of poverty, obedience, and conjugal fidelity; and take an oath to maintain the immaculate conception of the blessed Virgin.

† St. Jago or St. James. This is the highest order of knighthood in Spain, instituted in the twelfth century. They take an oath to defend the pilgrims that visit the tomb of St. James, at Compostella, from the insults of the Moors. They bear for arms a sword; the handle is in form of a cross, powdered with flowers de luce; and their motto is, Sanguine Arabum.

or most regular. We knew very well that the wits of Madrid made themselves merry at our expense; but we resembled those misers, who console themselves for the public scorn with a sight of their gold.

Isocrates has reason to call intemperance and folly the inseparable companions of wealth. When I found myself master of thirty thousand ducats, and in a condition to get, perhaps, ten times as much, I thought I must then make a figure worthy of the prime minister's confidant. I hired a whole house, which I furnished in a handsome manner; bought the coach of a notary, who had set it up through ostentation, and now wanted to get rid of it by the advice of his baker. I engaged a coachman; and, as it is but just to advance old servants, raised Scipio to the triple honor of my valet de chambre, secretary, and steward. But what put the finishing stroke to my pride, was the minister's allowing my people to wear his livery. This banished all the judgment that remained; and I became as mad as the disciples of Porcius Latro, who, when they had made themselves as pale as their master, by drinking decoctions of cumin, imagined themselves as learned; and well might believe myself the duke of Lerma's relation. I really took it into my head that I should pass for such, or perhaps, for one of his bastards: a reflection that gave me infinite pleasure.

Add to this, that, in imitation of his excellency, who kept open table, I resolved to entertain also. For this purpose I ordered Scipio to look out for a skilful cook; and he found one, who was, perhaps, comparable to that of Nomentanus,* of dainty memory. I furnished my cellar with delicious wines, and, after having laid in all other kinds of provision, began to receive company. Every evening, some of the principal clerks of the minister's office, who proudly assume the quality of secretaries of state, came to sup with me. I gave them good cheer, and always sent them home well watered. Scipio, on his side, (for it was like master, like man,) kept table also, in the buttery, where he regaled his acquaintances at my expense. But, exclusive of my regard for that young fellow, I thought, as he contributed to my getting money, he had a right to assist me in spending it. Besides, I looked upon this profusion like a young man, and did not perceive the consequence. I had another reason also, for overlooking it. Benefices and employments never ceased bringing grief to the mill; and seeing my finances daily increase, I thought I had, for once, drove a nail in the wheel of fortune.

There was nothing now wanting to gratify my vanity, but to make Fabricio an eye-witness of my pomp. I did not doubt that he was returned from Andalusia, and that I might have the pleasure of surprising him, sent him an anonymous billet, importing that a Sicilian nobleman, of his acquaintance, expected him to supper, at such a day, hour, and place. Nunnez came at the time appointed, and was amazed to find that I was the foreign nobleman who had invited him to supper. "Yes, friend (said I to him), this is my house; I have a handsome equipage, a good table, and a strong box besides." "Is it possible (cried he, with great vivacity) that I find thee again in such opulence! how happy am I in having recommended thee to Count Galiano! I told thee that he was a generous nobleman, who would soon make thee easy for life. Thou hast, doubtless, (added he,) followed the wise advice I gave thee, and given the butler a little more rein. I congratulate thee upon thy conduct; for it is by such prudent measures only, that the stewards in great families become so rich."

I let Fabricio applaud himself as much as he pleased, for having introduced me to the service of Count Galiano: after which, in order to moderate the joy which he felt for having procured me such a good post, I related the marks of gratitude with which that nobleman had repaid my service: but perceiving that my poet, while I made the detail, sung his recantation within himself, I said to him, "I forgive the Sicilian—between you and me, I have more cause to rejoice than be sorry at his behavior towards me. If the Count had not used me ill, I should have followed him to Sicily, where I should now be a servant in expectation of an uncertain establishment. In a word, I should not be confidant to the Duke of Lerma." Nunnez was so struck with these last words, that he continued, some minutes, incapable of uttering one syllable. Then breaking silence all of a sudden; "Did I understand you aright? (said he,) what! have you the confidence of the prime minister?" "I share it (I replied) with Don Rodrigo de Calderona, and, in all appearance, I shall make great progress." "Truly, Signor de Santillane, (said he,) I look upon you with admiration; you are capable of filling all sorts of employments. What talents you are master of! you have (to use the expression of our tennis court) the universal tool: that is to say, you are qualified for every thing. Finally, Signor, (added he,) I am overjoyed at your worship's prosperity." "O the devil! (said I, interrupting him,) Mr. Nunnez, truce with Signor and your worship: let us banish these terms, and live familiarly together." "Thou art in the right, (he replied,) I ought not to look upon thee otherwise than usual, although thou art become rich. I will confess my weakness: I was dazzled when I understood thy happy fate. But that prejudice is over, and I now behold thee again as my old friend Gil Blas."

Our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of four or five clerks. "Gentlemen, (said I to them, presenting Nunnez,) you shall sup with Signor Don Fabricio, who composes verses worthy of king Numa,† and writes in prose like a prodigy." Unluckily, I spoke to people who regarded poet-

try so little, that our author suffered on account of his profession. Scarce would they deign to favor him with a look. It was to no purpose that he said witty things in order to attract their attention: they did not perceive the beauty of his sallies; and he was so much piqued at their want of taste, that he made use of his poetical license, and cunningly withdrawing from the company, disappeared. Our clerks did not perceive his retreat, and sat down to table without so much as asking what was become of him.

Just as I had done dressing, next morning, and was going abroad, the post of the Asturias entered my chamber, saying, "I ask pardon (my friend) for having so abruptly left thy clerks last night; but truly, I was so much out of my element among them, that I could no longer endure my situation. A parcel of insolent fellows, with their self-sufficient starched airs! I can't comprehend how thou, who hast an acuteness of understanding, canst accommodate thyself to such stupid guests; this very day (added he) I will bring hither fellows of wit and spirit." "I shall be obliged to thee, (answered I,) and will entirely depend upon thy taste in the choice of them." "Thou art in the right, (said he,) I promise thee superior geniuses, of the most entertaining characters. I will go this instant to a coffee-house where they meet, and bespeak them before they engage themselves elsewhere; for, happy is the man who can have their company at dinner or supper, so much are they admired for their agreeable humor."

So saying, he left me, and at supper-time returned with six authors only, whom he introduced to me one after another, characterizing each as he presented him. To hear him, one would have thought that those wits surpassed those of ancient Greece and Italy; and their works (as he said) deserved to be engraven in letters of gold. I received those gentlemen very politely, and even affected to load them with civility; for the nation of authors is a little vain-glorious. Though I had not laid my injunctions on Scipio to take care that our table should be sumptuously furnished, as he knew what sort of people I was to treat that day, he had reinforced our services of his own accord. In short, we went to supper in high glee; my poets began to talk of themselves, and were not silent in their own praise. One, with a lofty air, mentioned grandees and ladies of quality who were delighted with his muse; another, finding fault with the choice which a learned academy had made of two members, modestly observed that they ought to have chosen him. The discourse of the rest was not a whit less arrogant. In the middle of supper they worried me with verse and prose, each, in his turn, repeating a specimen of his own writings; one regaled me with a sonnet, another rehearsed a scene of a tragedy; a third read a criticism upon a comedy; and a fourth, endeavoring, in his turn, to give us an ode of Anacreon translated into wretched Spanish verse, was interrupted by one of his brethren, who told him that he had used an improper term. The author of the translation denied his assertion; and a dispute arose, in which all the wits espoused one side or other; the votes were equal, the disputants grew hot, and proceeded to invectives: the debate still continued; until becoming furious, they got up and went by the ears together. Fabricio, Scipio, my coachman, lacques, and myself, had all sufficient work in parting them; which, when we had accomplished, they went away, as if from a public-house, without making the least apology for their impolite behavior.

Nunnez, upon whose promise I had formed an agreeable idea of this entertainment, remained very much out of countenance at this adventure. "Well, friend, (said I to him,) will you still extol your fellow-guests? Upon my conscience, you have brought hither a villainous set. I will henceforth keep to my clerks; don't talk to me of authors." "I will bring no more such, (answered he,) thou hast seen the best of the whole tribe."

BOOK VIII. CHAPTER X.

The morals of Gil Blas are entirely corrupted at court. He is charged with a commission by the Count de Lemos, and engages in an intrigue with that nobleman.

As soon as I was known to be in favor with the duke of Lerma, I had a court of my own. Every morning my antichamber was full of people, and I gave audience at my levee. Two kinds of company came thither; one, to buy my interest with the minister for favors; and the other, to move me by supplications, to obtain for them what they wanted gratis. The first were sure of being heard and assisted; but with regard to the last, I got rid of them immediately by evasive excuses, or amused them so long, that their patience forsook them. Before I belonged to court, I was naturally compassionate and charitable; but I no longer felt that humane weakness, and became as hard as flint. Of consequence, I cured myself of my friendship also, and stript myself of all social affection, as will appear by my behavior to Joseph Navarro, in an affair I am going to relate.

This Navarro, to whom I owed so many obligations, and who, in one word, was the first cause of my fortune, came one day to my house; and after having expressed a great deal of friendship for me, as he always did when we met, desired me to ask of the Duke of Lerma a certain employment for one of his friends; telling me, that the cavalier in whose behalf he solicited, was a very amiable young gentleman of great merit, but that he wanted a post for his subsistence: "I don't at all doubt (added Joseph) that, kind and obliging as you are, you will be overjoyed at an opportunity of serving a man of honor in distress; and I am sure that you will think yourself beholden to me for giving you this occasion of exerting your generosity." This was plainly telling me that he expected it for nothing; and though I did not much relish the proposal, I appeared very much disposed to

do what he desired. "I am charmed (answered I to Navarro) that I have it in my power to show my lively gratitude for all the favors which I have received at your hands. Your interesting yourself for any one, is a sufficient inducement for me to serve him; your friend shall have that place you have pitched upon for him, depend upon it; the affair is now no longer yours, but mine."

On this assurance, Joseph went away very well satisfied. Nevertheless, the person whom he recommended did not obtain the post in question. I procured it for another man, in consideration of a thousand ducats, which I put into my strong box, and which I preferred to any acknowledgment I might have expected from the clerk of the kitchen, to whom I said (with an air of mortification) when next we met, "Ah! my dear Navarro, you was too late in speaking to me: I was prevented by Calderona, who has given away that same post; and I am quite in despair that I have no better news to entertain you with."

Joseph implicitly believed what I said, and we parted more friends than ever: but I believe he soon discovered the truth, for he never after came to my house; and I was charmed at his absence. For besides my being burdened by the services he had done me, I thought it did not look well for people of my rank at court to keep company with butlers.

I have not mentioned the Count de Lemos a good while. Let us now return to that nobleman, whom I sometimes visited. I had carried to him two thousand pistoles, as I formerly observed, and afterwards gave him a thousand more by order of the Duke his uncle, out of the money I had belonging to his excellency. The Count de Lemos had a long conversation with me that day: he told me that he had at last gained his end, and entirely possessed the good graces of the Prince of Spain, whose sole confidant he was: he then gave me charge of a very honorable commission, which he had already prepared for me. "Friend Santillane (said he), now is the time to be doing: spare nothing to discover some young beauty, who should be worthy to amuse that gallant prince. You don't want wit, and I need say no more; go, run, search, and when you have made a lucky discovery, come and impart it to me." I promised to neglect nothing in acquitting myself handsomely of this employment, which must not be very difficult to exercise, since so many people live by the same profession.

I had not been much used to these kinds of inquiry; but not doubting that Scipio was an adept in the art, I called for him when I came home, and said to him in private: "Child, I am going to intrust thee with a great secret. Dost thou know, that in the midst of fortune's favors I find I want something?" "I can easily guess what that is (said he, interrupting me before I could proceed), you want an agreeable nymph to unbend and exhilarate your spirits; and truly it is astonishing that you should be without one in the prime of your age, when grave gray-beards cannot dispense with such recreation." "I admire thy penetration, (answered I, with a smile;) yes, a mistress I want, and desire to have one of thy recommending. But I must warn thee beforehand, that I am very delicate in these matters. I expect a lady of beauty and good morals." "What you require (replied Scipio) is not easily found; but, however, we live, thank God, in a city that affords some of all sorts, and I hope I shall soon be able to fit you to a hair."

Sure enough, in three days he said, "I have discovered a treasure: a young lady, whose name is Catalina, of a good family, and ravishing beauty; she lives under the tuition of her aunt, in a little house, where they subsist in an honorable manner on their fortune, which is but small; they are served by a chambermaid of my acquaintance, who has assured me, that though their door is shut to every body at present, it would be opened to a rich and liberal gallant, provided he were willing to avoid scandal, by going in at night without any show. Whereupon I described you as a cavalier, who deserved to find the door unlatched; and desired the maid to propose you to the ladies. She has promised to do so, and inform me of their answer to-morrow morning, at a certain place." "That's well (I replied), but I am afraid the chambermaid imposes upon thee." "No, no (said he,) I am not so easily persuaded; I have already interrogated the neighbors, and conclude from what they say, that Signora Catalina is a Danae, on whom you may descend like another Jupiter, in a shower of gold." Prejudiced as I was against intrigues of this kind, I engaged in it for once; and as the chambermaid came next day, and told Scipio, that if I pleased, I might be introduced that very evening to her mistress, I stole thither between eleven and twelve. The maid receiving me in the dark, took me by the hand, and led me into a pretty handsome hall, where I found the ladies richly dressed, and seated on satin couches. As soon as they perceived me, they got up, and saluted me in such a noble manner, that I took them for persons of quality. The aunt (whose name was Signora Mencía), though still agreeable, did not attract my attention, which was entirely engrossed by the niece, who seemed a goddess. To examine her minutely, however, she could not be called a perfect beauty; but she had such graces, together with a tempting luscious air, as hindered the eye to perceive her defects.

Accordingly, I was disturbed at sight of her. I forgot that I came thither to perform the office of procurer; spoke in my own favor, and expressed myself like a man inspired by the most violent passion. The young lady, in whom I found three times more wit than she really had (so courteous did she seem), quite enchanted me by her answers; and I began to lose the government of myself, when her aunt, in order to moderate my transports, addressed me in this manner: "Signor de Santillane, I must be free with you. On account of the character which I heard of your worship, I have permitted you to visit me, without enhancing the price of the favor, by standing on ceremony; but don't imagine yourself the

* Lucius Cassius Nomentanus, a famous epicure, that lived in the Augustan age, and ate up a vast fortune. He is upon honorable record in many places of Horace, for his nice taste in sensuality.

† The obscure verses sung by the Salian priests, in their processions, were composed by Numa.

nearer your point for that reason. I have hitherto brought up my niece in retirement, and you are (as I may say) the first cavalier to whose eyes she has been exposed. If you deem her worthy to be your wife, I shall be overjoyed at her good fortune. Consider, therefore, if she will suit you at that price; for you cannot have her at a cheaper rate."

This well-aimed shaft frightened away Cupid, who was just going to let fly an arrow at me. To speak without metaphor, a marriage so bluntly proposed made me recollect myself. I became again all of a sudden the faithful agent of the Count de Lemos, and changing my tone, replied to Signiora Mencia, "Madam, I am pleased with your frankness, which I intend to imitate. Whatever figure I make at court, I am not worthy of the incomparable Catalina, but have in view for her a much more splendid fate; in short, I design her for the Prince of Spain." "Your refusal of my niece (replied the aunt, coldly), was disobliging enough; there was no occasion to accompany it with a piece of railery." "I don't rally, indeed, Madam (cried I), nothing is more serious; I have orders to find out a lady who deserves to be honored with the private visits of the Prince of Spain; I find such an one in your house, and mark it for the scene accordingly."

Signiora Mencia was astonished at these words, which I perceived did not much displease her: nevertheless, believing that she ought to affect reserve, she answered in this manner: "If I was disposed to credit literally what you say, you must know that I am not of such a character as to rejoice in the infamous honor of seeing my niece mistress to a prince. My virtue disapproves." "What a saint you are with your virtue! (said I, interrupting her), you talk like one bred among silly citizens. Sure you joke, in pretending to consider things in a moral point of view? that would be stripping them of all their beauty: they must be surveyed with a carnal eye. Behold the heir apparent of Spain at the feet of the happy Catalina, adoring and loading her with presents; and remember, that from her perhaps will spring a hero, who will render his mother's name immortal as his own."

Although the aunt would have gladly embraced my proposal, she feigned herself irresolute about the matter; and Catalina, who wished the Prince already in her chains, affected great indifference; so that I was obliged to invest the place anew, until at length, Signiora Mencia, seeing me repulsed, and ready to raise the siege, beat the chamade, and we agreed upon a capitulation, which contained the two following articles:—*Imprimis*, if the Prince of Spain, on the report that I shall make of Catalina's charms, shall be inflamed, and determine to honor her with a nocturnal visit, I shall take care to apprise the ladies of the night that shall be chosen for that purpose. *Item*, the Prince shall not visit the said ladies but as an ordinary gallant, with no other attendants than me and his Mercury in chief.

After this convention, the aunt and niece showed me all manner of friendship, and assumed a familiarity of behavior, in consequence of which I ventured some hugs, which were not very ill received; and when we parted, they embraced me of their own accord, and loaded me with caresses. It is really wonderful to see with what facility an intimacy is contracted between the courtiers of gallantry and the women who want their service. Had people observed me leave this house with such marks of favor, they might have said, with some appearance of justice, that I was much happier than I actually found myself. The Count de Lemos was overjoyed when I let him know that I had made such a discovery as he desired. I spoke of Catalina in such a manner as made him long to see her. I carried him to her lodgings next night, and he owned that I had been very successful. He told the ladies, he did not at all doubt that the Prince would be perfectly well satisfied with the mistress which I had chosen for him, and that she on her part would have cause to be contented with such a lover: that the young Prince was full of generosity and sweetness of temper; in short, he assured them that he would bring him to their house in a few days, as they desired he should come, that is, without noise or attendance. This nobleman afterwards took his leave of them, and I withdrew in his company. We got back to his equipage, in which we had come thither, and which waited for us at the end of the street: he set me down at my own house, charging me to inform his uncle next day of this new-started adventure, and to desire he would send him a thousand pistoles to ensure his success.

I did not fail to give the Duke of Lerma an exact account of what had passed; concealing only one circumstance. I did not speak a syllable of Scipio, but took to myself the honor of the discovery, according to the practice of those who live among the great.

By these means I acquired a great many compliments. "Mr. Gil Blas (said the minister to me, with an air of railery), I am ravished to find, that with your other talents, you likewise possess that of discovering obliging beauties; when I have occasion for one of that class, you will give me leave to apply to you." "My lord (I replied in the same tone), I thank your Grace for intending me the preference; but give me leave to say, that I should be scrupulous of serving your excellency in that manner. Signior Rodrigo has been so long in possession of that employment, that it would be unjust in me to deprive him of it." The Duke smiled at my answer; then changing the discourse, asked if his nephew did not want money for his adventure? "Pardon me (said I), he begs you will send him a thousand pistoles." "Very well (replied the minister), carry them to him; bid him spare nothing, but approve of whatever expense the Prince shall propose."

CHAPTER XI.

The private visits and presents which the Prince of Spain made to Catalina.

I WENT that instant with five hundred double pistoles to the

Count de Lemos, who told me, "You could not come in better season. I have spoke to the Prince: he has bit at the hook, and burns with impatience to see Catalina. This very night he intends to slip privately out of the palace, in order to visit her. It is a thing determined, and our measures are taken accordingly. Inform the ladies of his resolution, and give them that money which you have brought: for it is right to let them see that he is no ordinary lover whom they are to receive; besides, the bounty of princes ought to precede their intrigues. As you will accompany him, together with me, (added he,) be sure of being at his couchee this evening. Your coach also (for I think it is proper we should use it) must wait for us near the palace about midnight."

I immediately repaired to the house, but did not see Catalina, who (they told me) was a-bed; so that I could only speak with Signiora Mencia, to whom I said, "Madam, pray excuse me for appearing in your house by day; but it is not in my power to do otherwise, for I must give you notice, that the Prince of Spain will be here this night; and here (added I, putting the bag of money in her hand) is an offering which he sends to the temple of Cythera, to render the divinities of the place propitious. You see I have not engaged you in a bad affair." "I am very much obliged to you (she replied); but tell me, Signior de Santillane, does the Prince love music?" "He loves it (answered I) to distraction; nothing can entertain him so much as a fine voice, accompanied by a lute delicately touched."

"So much the better, (cried she in a transport of joy;) you give me infinite pleasure in telling me this; for my niece has the pipe of a nightingale, and plays upon the lute to admiration; she likewise dances perfectly well." "Heavens! (cried I in my turn,) what perfections, my good aunt! so many are not necessary to make a girl's fortune; one of these talents is sufficient for the purpose."

Having thus paved the way, I waited for the hour of the Prince's couchee; then giving orders to my coachman, I rejoined the Count de Lemos, who told me that the Prince, to get rid of his company the sooner, would feign a slight indisposition, and even go to bed, the better to persuade them of his being sick, but that he would rise again in an hour, and, by a back door, gain a private stair that led into the courtyard.

When he had informed me of what they had concerted together, he posted me in a place through which he assured me they would pass; and there I danced attendance so long, that I began to think our gallant had taken another road, or lost his desire of seeing Catalina; as if princes usually drop these sort of whims before they have satisfied them. In short, I imagined they had forgot me altogether, when two men accosted me, whom having discerned to be those I expected, I conducted them to my coach, in which they seated themselves, while I got upon the coach-box to direct the driver, whom I ordered to stop about fifty yards from the house. I then handed the Prince and his companion out of the coach, and we walked towards the place for which we were bound. The gate opened at our approach, and shut again as soon as we got in.

At first we found ourselves in the same darkness in which I had been introduced; though by way of distinction there was a small lamp fixed on the wall, the light of which was so dim, that we could only perceive it, without being lighted by its rays. All this served only to make the adventure more agreeable to our hero, who was sensibly struck at the sight of the ladies, who received him in a hall where the lustre of a great number of candles made amends for the darkness that reigned in the court. The aunt and niece were in a gay disabille, so artfully disposed, that nobody could look upon them with impunity. Our Prince would have been very well satisfied with Signiora Mencia, if there had been no other for him to choose; but the charms of young Catalina, as they deserved, had the preference. "Well, my Prince, (said the Count de Lemos,) was it possible for us to procure your highness the pleasure of seeing two ladies more handsome than these?" "I am ravished with them both! (replied the Prince,) and I shall never carry off my heart; for the aunt could not miss of it, if it was possible for the niece to fail."

After this compliment, so agreeable to an aunt, he said a thousand fond things to Catalina, who answered with great wit and spirit. As those honorable people who perform the part that I acted on this occasion are permitted to join in the conversation of lovers, provided it be with the intention of adding fuel to the fire, I told the gallant that his nymph sung and played upon the lute to admiration. He was overjoyed to hear that she was mistress of these talents, and entreated her to entertain him with a specimen. She complied with a good grace, took up a lute ready tuned, played some tender airs, and sung in such an affecting manner, that the Prince dropt down at her feet in a transport of love and pleasure. But let us finish this picture, and only observe, that during this sweet intoxication, in which the heir of the Spanish monarchy was plunged, the hours stole away like minutes, and we were obliged to tear him from that dangerous house because of the day's approach. We, the gentlemen undertakers, carried him back to his apartment with great dispatch, and then went to our different homes, as well satisfied in having fitted him with a safe-adventurer, as if we had transacted his marriage with a princess.

Next morning I recounted this adventure to the Duke of Lerma, who desired to be informed of every particular; and just as I had finished my narration, the Count de Lemos came in, and said, "The Prince of Spain is so much engrossed by Catalina, and has conceived such a passion for her, that he proposes to visit her often, and attach himself to her alone. He wanted to send to her this day jewels to the amount of two thousand pistoles, but not having a penny in his purse, he applied to me. 'My dear Lemos, (said he), you must find me that sum immediately. I know very well

that I incommode, nay exhaust you, but my heart retains the obligation; and if ever I find myself in a condition to exert my gratitude, otherwise than in thought, for all your friendship you shall not repent for having laid me under an obligation.' My prince, (said I, leaving him that instant,) I have friends and credit, and will employ them both to accommodate you with what you want."

"It is not difficult to satisfy his demand (said the Duke to his nephew.) Santillane, go fetch the money: or, if you please, he will purchase the jewels, for he is a perfect connoisseur in stones, especially rubies. Is not this true, Gil Blas?" (added he, looking at me with a satirical smile.) "Your Grace is very severe (I replied): I see that you want to make Monsieur the Count merry at my expense." This happened accordingly. The nephew asked what mystery there was in his words. "Nothing (answered the Duke laughing), only Santillane one day thought proper to exchange a diamond for a ruby, and afterwards found that he had gained neither honor nor profit by the bargain."

I should have thought myself easily quit, if the minister had said no more of the matter; but he took the trouble to relate the trick that Camilla and Don Raphael played upon me in the hired lodging, and to enlarge particularly on those circumstances which chagrined me most. His excellency, after having enjoyed his joke, ordered me to accompany the Count de Lemos, who carried me to a jeweller's house, where we chose jewels, which we showed to the Prince for his approbation; and which, being afterwards entrusted to me in order to be presented to Catalina, I went home for two thousand pistoles of the Duke's money, with which I paid the merchant.

It is a question not to be asked, if I was kindly received next night by the ladies, when I exhibited the presents of my embassy, consisting of a handsome ring designed for the aunt, and a pair of ear-rings for the niece. Charmed with these marks of the Prince's love and generosity, they began to prattle like two gossips, and thanked me for having procured for them such a valuable acquaintance. They forgot themselves in the excess of their joy, and some words escaped them, which made me suspect that I had introduced a more gipsy to our great monarch's son; but that I might know precisely whether or not I had performed this fine masterpiece, I went home, resolved to come to an explanation with Scipio.

CHAPTER XII.

Catalina's real character. The perplexity and uneasiness of Gil Blas. The precaution he was obliged to take for his own quiet.

JUST as I entered my own house, I heard a great noise; and inquiring into the cause, was told, Scipio that evening treated half a dozen of his friends, who sung full throat, and frequently broke out in loud fits of laughter; so that assuredly this repast could not be properly styled the banquet of the seven wise men.

The master of the feast, advertised of my arrival, said to the company, "Gentlemen, it is only my master come home: be not disturbed, but continue your mirth; I will go and speak two words to him, and rejoin you in a twinkling." So saying, he came to my apartment. "What a hubbub is this! (said I,) what sort of people are those you entertain below? are they poets?" "No, indeed, Sir, if you please, (he replied,) it were pity to bestow your wine on such company. I make a better use of it. There is among my guests a very rich young fellow, who wants for his money an employment by your interest, and for him alone I give this entertainment: at every draught he drinks, I raise the gratification you are to receive ten pistoles, and will make him drink till day." "If that be the case, (I replied,) go back to thy friends, and don't spare the wine in my cellar."

I did not think this a proper season to talk with him about Catalina; but next morning when I got up I spoke to him in this manner: "Friend Scipio, thou knowest how we live together; I treat thee more like a comrade than a domestic; and of consequence thou wilt be to blame in deceiving me as a master. Let us then lay aside all reserve with one another. I will tell thee something that will surprise thee, and thou shalt disclose to me thy real sentiments of these two women with whom thou hast made me acquainted. Between thee and me, I suspect them to be two artful pussies, cunning in proportion to the simplicity which they affect. If my opinion does them justice, the Prince of Spain has no great cause to be well pleased with me: for I confess it was for him that I wanted a mistress. I accordingly carried him to Catalina's house, and he is become passionately fond of her." "Signior, (answered Scipio,) I am too well used by you, to be wanting in sincerity to my master. I had yesterday a private conversation with the maid of the two princesses, and she related their history, which to me seemed very diverting. You shall hear it in two words."

Catalina is daughter to a poor gentleman of Arragon, and finding herself at the age of fifteen an orphan, as handsome as poor, listened to an old commander, who conducted her to Toledo, where he died in six months, after having served as a parent rather than a husband to her. She secured his fortune, consisting of some moveables, and three hundred pistoles in ready money, then joined herself to Signiora Mencia, who was still in fashion, though already in the wane. These two good friends lived together, and began to behave so as to attract the notice of justice; at which the ladies being disgusted, hastily abandoned Toledo through vexation, and settled in Madrid, where they had lived about two years, without visiting any person in the neighborhood. But the best circumstance of the story is this—they have hired two small houses, separated only by a wall, having in the cellar a star of communication from the one to the other. Signiora Mencia lives with a young maid-servant in one of these houses, and

the commander's widow possesses the other, with an old duenna who passes for her grandmother; so that our Arragonian is sometimes a niece brought up by her aunt, and sometimes a pupil under the wings of her grandame. When she gets the niece, she is called Catalina; and when she plays the grandchild, her name is Sirena.

At the name of Sirena, I grew pale; and interrupting Scipio, said, "What do I hear? alas! I am afraid that this cursed Arragonian is no other than the mistress of Calderona." "Truly (he replied), it is the same. I thought this piece of news would have given you pleasure." "Thou art very much mistaken, (answered I,) I have more cause to be sorry than rejoiced at it; dost thou not see the consequences?" "No, in faith, (resumed Scipio,) what mischief can it produce? you are not sure that Don Rodrigo will discover what passes; and if you are afraid of his getting information, you have nothing to do but prepossess the minister in your favor, by telling him candidly the whole affair. He will see your sincerity; and if after this Calderona should attempt to do you an ill office with his excellency, he will perceive that his sole design is to injure you out of a spirit of revenge."

Scipio, by this discourse, banished my fear; and, resolving to follow his advice, I informed the duke of Lerma of the discovery I had made. I even affected to tell it with a melancholy air, in order to persuade him of my being mortified for having innocently introduced Don Rodrigo's mistress to the Prince. But the minister, far from pitying his favorite, laughed at the adventure, and bid me go on in my old way, saying, that after all it was glorious for Calderona to love the same lady who had captivated the Prince of Spain, and to be as well received by her as his highness. I imparted it also to the Count de Lemos, who assured me of his protection, in case the first secretary should discover the intrigue, and attempt to ruin me with his Grace.

Imagining that by this precaution I had delivered the bark of my fortune from the dangerous shelves that environed it, my fear vanished. I still accompanied the Prince to the house of Catalina, alias the fair Sirena, who was arduous enough to invent stratagems to keep Don Rodrigo from her embraces, and to defraud him of those nights which she was obliged to bestow on his illustrious rival.

CHAPTER XIII.

Gil Blas continues to act the man of consequence. Hears news of his family, which makes but small impression upon him, and quarrels with Fabricius.

I HAVE already observed, that in the morning my anti-chamber was usually crowded with people who came to make proposals, but I would not receive them viva voce; and according to the custom at court, or rather with a view of exhibiting my own importance, I said to each solicitor, "Give in a memorial." I was so much used to this, that one day I answered in these words to my landlord, who came to put me a mind of a year's rent being due. As for my butcher and baker, they saved me the trouble of asking their memorials, which were always punctually delivered every month. Scipio, who imitated me so closely, that the copy might be said to come very near the original, behaved in the same manner to those who applied for his interest with me. I was guilty of another ridiculous piece of vanity, which I don't intend to excuse. I was foolish enough to talk of the grandees, as if I had been a man in their sphere. If, (for example,) I had occasion to mention the duke of Alva, or the duke of Medina Sidonia, I called them without ceremony, "Alva, and Medina Sidonia." In a word, I became so vain and haughty, that I was no longer my father's son. Alas! poor duenna and usher, I did not so much as inquire whether you were happy or miserable in the Asturias; I did not even think of you. The court is like the river Lethe in making us forget our parents and friends when they are under misfortunes.

No longer, therefore, remembered my family, when one morning a young man came to my house, and desiring to speak with me in private, I carried him into my closet, where, without offering him a chair, because he seemed to be a pobleian, I asked what he wanted with me? "How! Signior Gil Blas, (said he,) don't you remember me?" In vain I considered him attentively: I was obliged to answer, that his features were entirely unknown. "I am (he replied) one of your old school-fellows, a native of Oviedo, and son of Bertrand Muscada, the grocer, your uncle the canon's neighbor. I remember you very well; we have played together a thousand times at Gallina Ciega."*

"I have (said I) but a confused idea of the amusements of my infancy: the business in which I have been engaged, since that time, has effaced them from my memory." "I am come (he resumed) to Madrid, to settle accounts with my father's correspondent: and I heard it said that you was on a good footing at court, and already as rich as a Jew. I congratulate you on your good fortune; and will, at my return into the country, overwhelm your family with joy, by telling them such an agreeable piece of news."

I could not, in common decency, forbear asking in what situation he had left my father, mother, and uncle: but this piece of duty I performed so coldly, that the grocer had no great reason to admire the force of blood. He seemed shocked at my indifference for those who ought to have been so dear to me; and being a plain, vulgar young fellow, said bluntly, "I thought you had more tenderness and sensibility for your relations. How coldly do you inquire into their circumstances! Know, that your father and mother are still at service; and the good canon Gil Peres, burdened with old age and infirmities, draws near his end. People ought to have some natural affection; and since you are in a condition to assist your parents, I advise you, as a friend, to send two

hundred pistoles yearly for their support: by which means you will make their life easy and happy, without any inconvenience to yourself." Instead of being moved by the picture which he drew of my family, I was disgusted at the liberty which he took in advising me, without being desired so to do. With a little more address, perhaps, he might have persuaded me; but his freedom had a contrary effect. He perceived my displeasure by my silence; and continuing his exhortation with more malice than charity, made me lose my patience entirely. "Oh, this is too much! (cried I in a passion,) go, Mr. Muscada, and meddle with your own concerns: it becomes you well, indeed, to prescribe to me: I know my duty, on this occasion, better than you can teach me." So saying, I pushed the grocer out of my closet, and sent him back to sell pepper and cloves at Oviedo. What he said, however, did not fail of having some effect: I reproached myself with being an unnatural son, and was melted accordingly. I recalled the care they had taken of my infancy and education: I considered the duty I owed to my parents; and my reflections were attended with some transports of acknowledgment, which, however, came to nothing: they were soon stifled by my ingratitude, and succeeded by profound oblivion. There are many parents who have children of the same stamp.

The avarice and ambition with which I was possessed entirely changed my disposition. I lost all my gaiety, became absent and thoughtful: in a word, a miserable animal. Fabricius, seeing me altogether bent on sacrificing to fortune, and very much detached from him, came but seldom to my house, where one day he could not help saying, "Truly, Gil Blas, thou art grown out of my knowledge: before thy coming to court, thou wast always easy and tranquil; at present, thou art incessantly agitated with project after project to enrich thyself; and the more wealth thou hast got, the more wouldst thou amass. Besides, let me tell thee, thou no longer treatest me with that effusion of the heart, and freedom of behavior, which are the soul of friendship; on the contrary, thou wrappest thyself up, and concealst from me thy secret views: nay, I can perceive constraint in all thy civilities towards me: in short, Gil Blas is no longer the same Gil Blas whom I formerly knew."

"You joke, sure, (said I, with an air of indifference,) I can't perceive any change in myself." "Thy own eyes are no judges, (answered he,) they are bewitched: believe me, thy metamorphosis is but too true. Speak sincerely, my friend, do thou and I live together as formerly? When I used to knock at thy door in the morning, thou camest in person to open it, very often half asleep; and I entered thy chamber without ceremony. Now behold the difference! Thou art attended by half a score of lacquies. I am obliged to wait in thy anti-chamber, and send in my name before I can speak with thee: then, how am I received? with a forced politeness and air of importance: so that my visits seem tedious and tiresome. Dost thou think such a reception can be agreeable to one who has lived with thee on the footing of a comrade? No, Santillana, no, I can't put up with it. Farewell. Let us part friends, and get rid of one another: thou of one who conspires thy behavior, and I of a rich upstart who has forgot himself."

I felt myself more irritated than reclaimed by his reproaches, and let him go, without making the least effort to detain him. In my opinion, at that time the friendship of a poet was not of such value as that I should be afflicted at the loss of it: I found abundance of consolation in the acquaintance of some small officers of the King, to whom of late I was strictly connected by a similitude of disposition. The greatest part of these new companions were people who sprung I know not whence, and arrived at their posts merely by the happy influence of their stars. They had already made their fortunes; and the wretches, ascribing to their own merit the wealth which had been heaped upon them by the bounty of the King, forgot themselves as well as I did. We looked upon ourselves as very respectable persons. O fortune! how are thy favors usually dispensed! The stoic Epictetus was certainly in the right, when he compared thee to a young lady of fashion, who prostitutes herself to the embraces of footmen.

BOOK IX.

CHAPTER I.

Scipio advises Gil Blas to marry, proposes the daughter of a rich and noted goldsmith for his wife; the steps which were taken in consequence of this advice.

ONE evening, after the company which had supped with me was gone, seeing myself alone with Scipio, I asked what he had done that day? "A masterpiece (he replied): I intend to have you married to the only daughter of a goldsmith of my acquaintance." "The daughter of a goldsmith! (cried I, with an air of disdain,) hast thou lost thy senses? How canst thou propose a wife from the city? One who has certainly merit, and is on a sure footing at court, ought to entertain more elevated views, methinks." "How, Sir? (replied Scipio,) sure you are not in earnest: consider that the male alone ennobles; and be not more delicate than a thousand noblemen, whose names I can mention. Do you know that the heiress in question is worth a hundred thousand ducats? Is not this a fine morsel of plate?" When I heard him talk of such a round sum, I became more tractable. "I yield (said I to my secretary): the dowry determines me; when shall I touch it?" "Softly, Sir (he replied), a little patience: I must first communicate the proposal to the father, and obtain his consent." "Good! (said I, laughing heartily:) are you still thereabouts? I find the marriage is far advanced." "Farther than you imagine, (answered he:) I want only an hour's conversation with the goldsmith, and will answer for his consent. But before we proceed, let us come to a com-

position, if you please. Suppose I procure for you those hundred thousand ducats, how many will fall to my share?" "Twenty thousand," (I replied.) "Heaven be praised! (said he:) I limit the acknowledgment to ten thousand: for once you are more generous than I. To-morrow I will set this negotiation on foot; and you may depend upon its success: otherwise I am but an ass." In effect, two days after, he said, "I have spoke to Signior Gabriel Salero the goldsmith; and have extolled your credit and your merit so much, that he listened to the proposal I made, of accepting you for a son-in-law: and you shall have his daughter with a hundred thousand ducats, provided you can make it plainly appear that you are in favor with the minister." "If that be the case, (answered I to Scipio,) I shall be married very soon; but a-propos, hast thou seen the girl? Is she handsome?" "Not so handsome as the dowry (said he); between you and me, this rich heiress is not a very beautiful creature: but, luckily, that you don't mind." "No, faith, my child! (said I,) we courtiers only marry for the sake of marrying, and look for beauty no where but in the wives of our friends. If it happens to center in our own, we take so little notice of it, that it is but just in them to punish us for our neglect."

"This is not all, (resumed Scipio.) Signior Gabriel invites you to supper to-night, and we have agreed that you shall not talk of marriage. There will be several merchants of his acquaintance present at the entertainment, where you shall appear only a simple guest: and to-morrow he will sup with you in the same manner. By this you may see that he wants to study your temper before he proceeds: so that you must be on your guard before him." "Zooks! (said I, with an air of confidence,) let him examine me as narrowly as he pleases; I shall lose nothing by his scrutiny."

All this was punctually executed: I repaired to the house of the goldsmith, who received me as familiarly as if we had already visited one another several times. He was an honest citizen, polite hasta porfir, as the saying is. He introduced me to Signiora Eugenia, his wife, and young Gabriela, his daughter, to whom I paid abundance of compliments without infringing the treaty. I said a great many things, in very specious words, according to the custom of courtiers.

Gabriela (no disparagement to my secretary) appeared not at all disagreeable; whether on account of her being richly dressed, or that I looked upon her through the dowry, I know not. What a fine house did Signior Gabriel possess! I believe there was more silver in it than in all the mines of Peru: that metal presented itself to the view, in all corners, under a thousand different shapes. Every room, and that in particular where we supped, was a perfect treasure. What a noble spectacle was this for the eyes of a son-in-law! The old man, that he might do the greater honor to his entertainment, had assembled five or six merchants, persons equally grave and tedious: they spoke of nothing but commerce; and their discourse might have been called a conference of factors, rather than the conversation of friends at supper.

Next night I treated our goldsmith in my turn; and as it was not in my power to dazzle him with plate, had recourse to an illusion of a different kind. I invited to supper those of my friends who made the best figure at court, and whom I knew to be ambitious fellows, and who set no bounds to their desires. These people talked of nothing but pomp, of splendid and lucrative posts to which they aspired; and this had its effect: the citizen Gabriel, confounded by their grand ideas, found himself, in spite of his wealth, a mortal man in comparison of these gentlemen. As for my own part, affecting the man of moderation, I said I would be contented with a middling fortune; twenty thousand ducats a year, or so. Upon which these greedy hunters of honor and riches cried, I was in the wrong; and that a man who (like me) was beloved by the prime minister, ought not to restrict himself to such a trifle. The father-in-law lost not a syllable of what was said, and I thought I observed him very well satisfied when he retired.

Scipio did not fail to visit him next morning, and asked if he was pleased with my behavior: "I am charmed with it, (replied the citizen:) the young man has won my heart. But Signior Scipio (added he,) I conjure you, by our old acquaintance, to speak sincerely. We have all our different foibles, as you know; tell me that of Signior de Santillana: is he a gamester? is he a rake? What is his vicious inclination? Pray don't conceal it." "You affront me, Signior Gabriel, by asking such a question, (replied the mediator:) I am not so much in my master's interest as in yours. If he had any bad quality capable of making your daughter unhappy, do you think I would have proposed him to you for a son-in-law? No, faith! I am too much your humble servant. But between you and me, I know no other fault in him, but that of having no fault. He is too modest for a young man." "So much the better, (cried the goldsmith:) I am glad of it. Go, friend, assure him that he shall have my daughter, whom I would bestow upon him, even if he was not beloved by the minister."

My secretary had no sooner informed me of this conversation, than I hastened to Salero's house to thank him for his condescension. He had already declared his pleasure to his wife and daughter, who gave me to understand, by their behavior towards me, that they submitted to his will without reluctance. I carried my father-in-law, and presented him to the Duke of Lerma, to whom I had imparted the affair the preceding evening. His excellency received him very courteously, and assured him that he was very glad he had chosen for a son-in-law a man for whom he had so much regard, and whom he intended to advance. He then enlarged upon my good qualities, and, in short, spoke so well of me, that honest Gabriel thought he had met in my worship one of the best

* Blind man's buff.

* Even to obstinacy.

matches in Spain. He was so overjoyed, that the tear stood in his eye: he clasped me in his arms at parting, and said, "My son, I am so impatient to see you Gabriela's husband, that you shall be married in eight days at farthest."

CHAPTER II.

Gil Blas, by accident, remembers Don Alphonso de Leyra, and does him a piece of service out of vanity.

THE order of my history requires that I should leave my marriage for a moment, to recount the services which I did to Don Alphonso, my old master, whom I had entirely forgotten till now, and I remembered him on this occasion. The government of the city of Valencia became vacant, and when I heard this piece of news, I thought of Don Alphonso de Leyra. I reflected, that this employment would suit him admirably well; and, not so much through friendship as ostentation, resolved to ask it for him; representing to myself, that if I should obtain the place, it would do me infinite honor. Addressing myself, therefore, to the Duke of Lerma, I told him that I had been steward to Don Cesar de Leyra and his son; and that having all the reason in the world to love them, I took the liberty to beg the government of Valencia for either the one or the other. The minister answered, "With all my heart, Gil Blas: I love to see thee grateful and generous. Besides, I esteem the family thou speakest of: the Leyras have been always good servants to the king, and well deserve that place. Thou mayest dispose of it at thy own pleasure: I give it thee for a nuptial present."

Ravished with my success, I went without loss of time, and desired Calderona to make out letters patent for Don Alphonso. There I found a great number of people attending in respectful silence, until Rodrigo should give them audience; and pressing through the crowd, I presented myself at the door of his closet, which was immediately opened, and displayed a multitude of knights, commanders, and other people of consequence, whom Calderona heard in their turns. His different behavior to different people was very remarkable: he received some with a slight inclination of his head only; others he honored with a bow, and conducted them to his closet door. He put (to use the expression) different shades of consideration in the civilities he showed. On one hand I perceived some cavaliers, who, shocked at the little regard he paid to them, cursed in their hearts the necessity that compelled them to cringe to such a fellow. On the contrary, I observed others, who laughed within themselves at his ridiculous and self-sufficient deportment. Though I made all these fine observations, I was not capable of profiting by them; for I behaved at home just in the same manner, and little minded whether my haughty carriage was blamed or approved, provided it commanded respect.

Don Rodrigo having, by chance, cast his eyes upon me, hastily quitted a gentleman, to whom he was speaking, and coming up, embraced me with demonstrations of friendship that surprised me not a little. "Ah! my dear colleague (cried he), what affair procures me the pleasure of seeing you here? is there any thing in which I can serve you?" I told him the cause of my visit; and he assured me, in the most obliging terms, that what I wanted should be done by the same hour next day. He did not limit his politeness to this, but conducted me as far as the door of the anti-chamber, whither he never used to go, except with grantees, and there embraced me anew.

What is the meaning of all this civility? (said I to myself, going out,) what can it forebode? Sure Calderona meditates my ruin. Perhaps he is desirous of gaining my friendship; or, feeling his favor on the decline, cultivates me with a view of engaging my intercession with our patron in his behalf. I did not know which of these conjectures I should adopt. Next day, when I returned, he treated me in the same manner, loading me with civility and caresses. True, indeed, he bated a great deal of that politeness, in his reception of other people who came to speak with him. He was blunt with some, cold with others, and dissembling to every body. But all of them were sufficiently revenged by an adventure which happened, and which I ought not to pass over in silence. This will be an advice to the reader, and for those clerks and secretaries who shall read it.

A man in very plain dress, and who did not at all appear what he was, approached Calderona, and spoke to him of a certain memorial, which he said he had presented to the Duke of Lerma. Don Rodrigo, who did not even look at the cavalier, said to him, in a surly tone, "What is your name, friend?" "I was called Francillo in my infancy," (replied the cavalier, very coolly;) "since that time, I have had the appellation of Don Francisco de Zuniga,* and, at present, my name is the Count de Pedrosa." Calderona, astonished at these words, and finding that he had to do with a man of the first quality, endeavored to excuse himself. "Signor (said he to the Count), I beg pardon, if I do not know you." "I want none of thy excuses (said Francillo, with disdain), I despise thy apologies as much as thy incivility. Know, that a minister's secretary ought to receive all sorts of people with good manners. Thou mayest, if thou wilt, be vain enough to look upon thyself as thy master's deputy; but don't forget that thou art only his valet."

Though the haughty Don Rodrigo was very much mortified at this incident, he did not become a whit more affable. As for my part, I marked this stroke, and resolved to take care how I behaved to people in giving audience, and never to be insolent but with mutes. As Don Alphonso's patent was expedited, I carried it away, and sent it, by an express, to that young nobleman, with a letter from the Duke of Lerma, in which his excellency informed him that the king had

* Zuniga, one of the most ancient families of Castile.

† Valencia, the capital of the kingdom that bears the same

named him to the government of Valencia.† I took no notice of the share I had in this nomination; I would not even write; pleasing myself with the hope of telling him by word of mouth, and of surprising him agreeably, when he should come to court to take the oaths for his employment.

CHAPTER III.

The preparations for the marriage of Gil Blas, and the great event that renders them useless.

LET us return to my fair Gabriela, whom I was to marry in eight days. Both parties prepared for the ceremony: Salero bought rich clothes for the bride; and I hired a chambermaid, a page, and an old squire, for her attendants. All this was ordered by Scipio, who waited even more impatiently than I for the day on which the dowry was to be paid.

On the evening preceding that day so much desired, I supped at the house of my father-in-law, with uncles, aunts, male and female cousins, and played the part of a hypocritical son-in-law to great perfection. I showed great respect to the goldsmith, and his wife, acted the passionate lover to Gabriela, and behaved very courteously to the whole family, to whose flat discourse and civil-like observations I patiently listened. Accordingly, at the price of my patience, I had the good fortune to please all the relations. There was not one among them who did not seem glad of my alliance.

The repast being ended, the company removed into a great hall, where we were regaled with a concert of vocal and instrumental music, which was not ill executed, although they had not chosen the best hands of Madrid. Several gay airs, with which our ears were agreeably entertained, put us all in such good humor, that we began to form country dances. God knows how we performed, since I was taken for a disciple of Terpsichore: though I had no other principles of that art, than two or three lessons, which I received from a cocomber of a dancing-master, who came to teach the pages, when I lived with the marchioness of Chaves. After we had sufficiently diverted ourselves, it being time for each to think of retiring, I was very prodigal of my hugs and bows. "Adieu, my son," (said Salero, embracing me.) "I will wait on you to-morrow morning, with the dowry, in good gold." "My dear father (I replied), you shall be very welcome." Then wishing the family good night, I got into the coach that waited for me at the gate, and drove homewards.

I was scarce two hundred paces from Signior Gabriel's house, when fifteen or twenty men, some on horseback, others afoot, armed with swords and carabines, surrounded the coach and stopped it, crying, "In the King's name!" They made me come out in a hurry, and threw me into a post-chaise, where the chief of these cavaliers, mounted along with me, bid the driver proceed for Segovia. I soon guessed that my fellow-traveller was an honest alguazil, whom I questioned about the cause of my imprisonment. But he answered in the usual tone of those gentlemen, that is, in a brutal manner, that he was not obliged to tell me any thing of the matter. I observed that perhaps he might be mistaken in the man. "No no," (said he), "I know my business better. You are Signior de Santillane, and you have orders to conduct to the place for which we are bound." Having nothing to reply, I resolved to hold my tongue. We travelled all the rest of the night, along Mancaranes, in profound silence; changed horses at Colmenar, and arrived in the evening at Segovia,* where I was locked up in the tower.

CHAPTER IV.

The treatment of Gil Blas in the tower of Segovia, and the manner in which he learned the cause of his imprisonment.

THEY began with putting me into a dungeon, where I was left upon straw, like a malefactor worthy of death. Here I passed the night, not in deploring my condition, for as yet I had not perceived the whole of my misfortune, but in tasking my remembrance to find out the cause of my imprisonment. I did not doubt that it was the work of Calderona; nevertheless, though I suspected that he had discovered the whole, I could not conceive how he had prevailed upon the Duke of Lerma to treat me so cruelly. Sometimes I imagined that I had been arrested without the knowledge of his excellency; and sometimes I thought that he himself was the cause of my misfortunes, for some political reasons that often induce ministers to use their favorites in this manner.

I was strongly agitated by these different conjectures, when the light of day, penetrating through a little grate, presented to my view the horror of the place in which I was. I then grieved without moderation, and my eyes became two sources of tears, which the remembrance of my prosperity rendered inexhaustible. While I abandoned myself to my sorrow, a turnkey came into my dungeon, with a loaf and a pitcher of water, for the day's allowance. He looked at me, and ob-

name, is situated on the banks of the Guadalquivir, about half a league from the sea. It is the see of an archbishop, and seat of an university, a place of great trade, and, on the whole, so agreeable as to have obtained the name of Valencia la hermosa; Valencia the beautiful. This country was formerly in possession of the Moors, from whom the city was taken, about the end of the eleventh century, by the famous Ruy Dias surnamed the Cid.

* Segovia, a city of New Castile, about twelve leagues from Madrid; famous for its woollen manufacture; the tower, that was built by the Moors; the mint, which surpasses all works of the same kind in Europe; and an aqueduct, built by the emperor one of the finest monuments of antiquity. It extends three thousand paces from one mountain to another; and is supported by one hundred and seventy-seven arches in two tiers, forming, as it were, a double bridge. This edifice is built of large hewn stones, so artfully joined without mortar or cement, that it remains undamaged to the present age: whereas the little improvements that are occasionally made upon it for the public use, seldom last longer than fifteen or twenty years.

serving that my face was bathed in tears, jailer as he was, felt an emotion of pity. "Signior prisoner, (said he), don't despair. You must not be so sensible of the vicissitudes of life; you are young, and will see better days. Meanwhile, eat the king's allowance with a good grace."

My comforter went out when he had pronounced these words, to which I made no answer but by groans and lamentations. I spent the whole day in cursing my fate, without thinking of doing honor to my provision, which, to me, in my present situation, seemed not so much a present of the king's bounty as the effect of his rage; since it served rather to prolong than assuage the pains of the unhappy.

Night, in the mean time, arrived, and immediately a great noise of keys attracted my attention. The door of my dungeon opened, and a moment after, a man entering with a candle in his hand, approached me, saying, "Signior Gil Blas, behold one of your old friends. I am that Don Andrea de Tordesillas, who lived with you at Grenada, and was gentleman to the archbishop, while you was in favor with that prelate. You desired him, if you remember, to employ his credit in my behalf; and, by his interest, I was named for an employment in Mexico; but, instead of embarking for the Indies, I stopped in the city of Alicante, where I married the daughter of him who commanded the castle, and by a train of adventures which I shall recount to you by and by, I am now become keeper of the tower of Segovia. I have express orders to keep you from the speech of every living soul, to make you lie upon straw, and live upon bread and water only. But I have too much humanity not to pity your misfortune; besides, you have done me service; and my gratitude prevails over the orders which I have received. Far from being the instrument of that cruelty which they would exercise upon you, I intend to soften the rigor of your fate. Get up and follow me."

Although Mr. Keeper well deserved my thanks, my understanding was so much disturbed, that I could not answer one word. I did not fail, however, to follow him through a court, and up a narrow stair, to a small room, quite at-top of the tower. I was not a little surprised, when I entered this chamber, to see two lights burning in brazen candlesticks, and two handsome covers on a table. "The victuals will be presently brought," (said Tordesillas,) "and we will sup here together. I have destined this retreat for your lodging, where you will live much more comfortably than in your dungeon. You will see, from your window, the flowery banks of the Erena, and the delightful valley which extends from the feet of the mountains that separate the two Castiles, as far as Coca. I know that at first you will not be very sensible of such a fine prospect; but when the violence of your grief shall be mellowed, by time, into a soft melancholy, you will take pleasure in making an excursion with your eyes over such agreeable objects. Besides, you may be assured of being well provided in linen, and other necessities befitting a gentleman of delicacy and taste. Moreover, you shall have a good bed, comfortable diet, and be furnished with as many books as you choose to read. In a word, you shall be as well treated as a prisoner can be."

Finding myself a little eased by such obliging offers, I took courage, gave my jailer a thousand thanks, told him that he recalled me to life by his generous behavior, and that I wished I might ever again have an opportunity of showing my gratitude. "And why not have an opportunity? (he replied), do you think you have lost your liberty for ever? You are mistaken: and I dare assure you, that you will be quit for a few months of imprisonment." "What say you, Signior Don Andrea? (cried I), it seems then you know the cause of my misfortune." "I confess (said he) I am not ignorant of the affair. The alguazil, who brought you hither, imparted the secret to me; and I shall now reveal it."

"He told me that the king being informed of your having, in concert with the Count de Lemos, carried the Prince of Spain to the house of a suspected lady, had, to punish you both, exiled the Count, and sent you to the tower of Segovia, to be treated with all the rigor which you have experienced since your arrival." "And how (said I) did this affair come to the knowledge of the King? it is that circumstance in particular of which I want to be informed." "And that circumstance (he replied) is what I could not learn from the alguazil, who, in all likelihood, is himself ignorant of the matter."

Here our conversation was interrupted by the entrance of several valets, who brought up supper. They put upon the table some bread, two cups, two bottles, and three large dishes, in one of which there was a ragout of hare, with plenty of onions, oil, and saffron; an olla podrida* in another; and the third contained a turkey-pow on a marmalade of berengena.† When Tordesillas saw that we had every thing we wanted, he sent away his servants, not caring that they should overhear our discourse, and having locked the door, we sat down at table, opposite to one another. "Let us begin (said he) with what is most needful. You must have a good appetite after a fast of two days." So saying, he loaded my plate with victuals, imagining that he served one half-starved; and really he had reason to think I would stuff myself with his ragouts. Nevertheless, I balked his expectation; and how much soever my condition required food, I could not swallow a morsel; so much did I take to heart my present situation. To dispel the cruel imaginations which incessantly afflicted me, my keeper in vain exhorted me to drink, by extolling the excellence of his wine. Had he given me nectar, I should have drunk it without pleasure at that time. He perceived my chagrin, and changing his battery, began to recount, in a pleasant manner, the history of his own marriage. But I heard his narration with such absence of thought,

* Olla podrida, a dish composed of all sorts of food.

† Berengena, a kind of fruit growing like a cucumber, and eaten, like French beans, with mutton, &c.

that when it was ended, I could not have repeated one word of what he said. He concluded that he undertook too much in attempting to divert my sorrow that evening; and when supper was over, got up, saying, "Signior de Santillane, I will leave you to your repose, or rather, to muse at leisure upon your misfortune. But I repeat it again, it will not be of long duration: the King is naturally good: when his wrath subsides, and he shall reflect upon the deplorable situation in which he believes you to be, he will think you sufficiently punished." So saying, Mr. Keeper went down stairs, and sent up his servants to uncover the table. They carried off every thing, even to the candles, and I went to bed by the melancholy light of a lamp that was fixed to the wall.

CHAPTER V.

His reflections before he went to sleep, and an account of the noise that woke him.

I spent two hours at least in reflecting upon what Tordesillas had told me. I am confined here, then, said I to myself, for having contributed to the pleasures of the heir apparent. How imprudent was I, in doing services of that kind to so young a prince: for his tender years alone make me guilty. Had he been in a more advanced age, the King would, perhaps, have laughed at that which now incenses him so much. But who can have given such a piece of information to that monarch, without fearing the resentment of the Prince or that of the Duke of Lerma; who will doubtless revenge his nephew the Count de Lemos? How then has the King discovered it? that I cannot comprehend.

His doubts always returned. The idea, however, that afflicted me most, that drove me to despair, and from which my mind could not detach itself, was the pillage to which I concluded my effects had been abandoned. My strong box! cried I, my dear riches! what has become of you? into whose hands are you fallen? alas! I have lost you, even in less time than that in which you were amassed! I painted to myself the disorder that must then reign in my house; and, on that subject, made reflections, every one more melancholy than another. The confusion of so many different thoughts threw me into an oppression that became favorable; and sleep, which had avoided me the preceding night, shed his influence over my senses. To this, the goodness of the bed, the fatigue which I had undergone, as well as the vapors of the victuals and wine, contributed. I enjoyed a profound sleep, and, probably, the day would have surprised me in this condition, had I not been waked, all of a sudden, by a noise pretty extraordinary for a prison. I heard the sound of a guitar, accompanied with a man's voice. I listened with attention, and hearing no more, believed it was a dream: but, in a moment, my ear was struck again with the sound of the instrument, and the same voice, which sung the following verses:

* Ay de mí! un ano felice
Parece un soplo ligero;
Fero fin dicha un instante
Es un siglo de tormento.

My sorrow was increased by this couplet, which seemed to have been made on purpose for me. I have but too well experienced the truth of these words, (said I); methinks the season of my prosperity passed away very soon, and that I have been already a whole age in prison. I relapsed into a tumble reverie, and began again to deplore my fate, as if I had taken pleasure in the task. My lamentations, however, ended with the night; and the first rays of the sun, with which my chamber was enlightened, a little calmed my disquiet. I got up to air my room, by opening the window, and surveyed the country, of which I remembered Mr. Keeper had given such a fine description. But I could find nothing to justify what he had said; the Erema, which I imagined was at least equal to the Tagus, appeared to be no more than a rivulet, its flowery banks were bedecked with the nettles and thistle only, and the pretended delightful valley presented nothing to my view, but lands for the most part barren and uncultivated. Probably I was not yet arrived at that sweet melancholy, which made things appear otherwise than I beheld them at that time.

I began to put on my clothes, and was already half dressed, when Tordesillas came in, followed by an old woman servant who brought shirts and towels for my use. "Signior Gil Blas (said he), here is linen: don't be frugal of it; for I shall take care to let you have as much as you can use. Well, (added he), how did you pass the night? were your sorrows suspended for a few moments by sleep?" "I should have slept, perhaps, till now, (answered I), had I not been awakened by a voice, accompanied by a guitar." "The cavalier who has disturbed your repose (said he), is a state prisoner, whose chamber is contiguous to yours. He is a knight of the military order of Calatrava, and has a very amiable character: his name is Don Gaston de Cogollos. You may, if you please, visit and eat with one another. You will find a mutual consolation in each other's acquaintance, which will be very agreeable to both."

I assured Don Andres, that I was extremely sensible of his kindness in permitting me to unite my grief with that of the cavalier; and as I expressed some impatience to be acquainted with that companion in misfortune, our obliging keeper procured me the pleasure that very day; and carried me to dinner with Don Gaston, who surprised me with his beauty and fine shape. You may judge what he must be, to make such a strong impression upon eyes accustomed to behold the most shining youth at court. Imagine to yourself a man made for love, one of those heroes of romance, who, by showing themselves only, could rob princesses of their rest. Add

to this that nature, which usually deals out her gifts sparingly, had endowed Cogollos with a great deal of understanding and valor; so that he was a perfect cavalier.

If I was charmed by this knight, I had also the good fortune to be agreeable to him. He no more sung in the night for fear of incommodeing me, notwithstanding my entreaties that he would not constrain himself on my account. An intimacy is soon contracted between two persons oppressed by misfortune. A tender friendship was the immediate consequence of our acquaintance, and became stronger and stronger every day. The liberty we enjoyed of conversing together when we pleased, was very useful to us both; since by our discourse we aided one another, reciprocally, to bear our misfortunes with patience.

One afternoon, entering his room just as he was going to play on his guitar, that I might hear him the more conveniently, I sat down on a stool, which was all the seat he had; and he, placing himself on his bed's feet, played a very moving air; and sung words to it, which expressed the despair to which the cruelty of a lady reduced her lover. When he had done, I said to him, with a smile, "Signior Knight, these are words which you were never obliged to employ in your amours: you are too well qualified to find the women cruel." "You have too good an opinion of me, (he replied); I composed, in my own behalf, the verses which you have heard, to soften a heart which I believe harder than diamond, and move to compassion a lady who treated me with extreme rigor. I must entertain you with that story, by which you will also learn the cause of my misfortune."

CHAPTER VI.

The history of Don Gaston de Cogollos, and Donna Helena de Galisteo.

Nor much less than four years ago, I set out from Madrid for Coria, to visit Donna Eleonora de Laxarilla, my aunt, one of the richest widows in Old Castile, whose heir I am. I was no sooner arrived at her house, than love began to invade my repose. The windows of my apartment faced the lattices of a lady who lived opposite to my aunt's house; and I could easily perceive her, by the assistance of the width of her grates and the narrowness of the street. I did not neglect the opportunity; and found my neighbor so handsome that I was enchanted at once. I expressed my passion so plainly, by my eyes, that she could not be mistaken. She perceived it accordingly; but was not at all disposed to pride herself in her observation, and still less to answer my coquetries.

I made inquiries about this dangerous person, who captivated hearts so suddenly, and learned that her name was Donna Helena; that she was the only daughter of Don George de Galisteo, who possessed a rich manor a few leagues from Coria; that many matches had been in her offer; but her father rejected them all, because he was resolved to give her in marriage to his nephew Don Augustin de Oligheira; who, in the mean time, had the privilege of seeing and conversing with his cousin every day. I was not discouraged by this piece of information; on the contrary it inflamed my passion; and the proud pleasure of supplanting a beloved rival, excited me, perhaps even more than my love, to pursue my point. I continued then to address Helena with the most passionate looks: I supplicated her maid Felicia in the same language, in order to implore her assistance. I even talked on my fingers. But these gallantries were of no use. I made as little impression on the maid as on her mistress; they seemed equally cruel and inaccessible.

Since they refused to answer the language of my eyes, I had recourse to other interpreters; and set people to work, to discover what acquaintances Felicia had in town. They got notice that an old gentleman, called Theodora, was her best friend, and that they often visited one another. Overjoyed at this discovery, I went to Theodora in person, and by presents engaged her in my interests. She espoused my cause, promised to procure for me a private conversation with her friend at her house, and kept her promise the very next day. "I am no longer unhappy (said I to Felicia) since my misfortunes have excited your compassion. How much am I indebted to your friend for having prevailed upon you to grant me the satisfaction of an interview!" "Signior, (answered she,) Theodora can do any thing with me: she has engaged me in your behalf; and if it be in my power to make you happy, you shall soon enjoy your wish; but with all my good will, I don't know that I can give you much assistance: for, not to flatter you, you have never formed a more difficult enterprise. You are in love with a lady who is prepossessed in favor of another cavalier: and what sort of a lady? one so full of pride and dissimulation, that if, by dint of perseverance and assiduity, you should succeed so far as to cost her some sighs, don't imagine that her pride will give you the pleasure of hearing them." "Ah! my dear Felicia! (cried I, in a transport of grief), why do you describe the obstacles which I have to surmount! I am assuaged by your information: deceive me rather than drive me to despair." So saying, I took one of her hands, and pressing it to mine, put upon her finger a diamond worth three hundred pistoles, accompanied with such moving expressions as brought the tears into her eyes.

She was too much affected by my discourse, and too well satisfied with my behavior, to leave me altogether without consolation. She began to smooth the difficulties a little, saying, "Signior, what I have represented ought not to deprive you of hope. Your rival, it is true, is not hated; he is at liberty to come and visit his cousin, and talk to her whenever he pleases; and this is a circumstance favorable for you. Their being accustomed to see one another every day, renders their conversation a little languid; they seem to part without pain, and meet again without pleasure: one would think they were already married. In a word, I don't per-

ceive that my mistress has a violent passion for Don Augustin: besides, as to personal qualifications, there is a difference between you and him that must turn to your account in the eyes of such a delicate young lady as Donna Helena. Be not discouraged, therefore; continue your gallantry, which I will second; and I will not let slip one opportunity of making every thing you do to please her tend to your advantage with my mistress. In vain shall she attempt to disguise her sentiments. I will soon discover them, in spite of her dissimulation."

After this conversation, Felicia and I parted, very well satisfied with one another. I prepared anew to ogle Don George's daughter, whom I treated with a serenade, in which the verses you have heard were sung by a fine voice, which I had provided for the purpose. After the concert, the maid, in order to sound her mistress, asked how she had been entertained? "The voice (said Donna Helena) gave me pleasure." "And were not the words which were sung very moving?" (replied the maid.) "I paid no attention to them (said the lady); I listened to the tune only: I took no notice of the verses, neither do I desire to know who gave the serenade." "If that be the case, (cried the waiting-woman,) poor Don Gaston de Cogollos is far out in his reckoning, and not very wise in spending his time in looking at our lattices." "Perhaps it may not be he, (said the mistress, coldly,) but some other cavalier, who has declared his passion for me by this concert." "Pardon me, Madam, (replied Felicia,) it is no other but Don Gaston; by this token, that he accosted me this morning in the street, and begged me to tell you, that he adores you in spite of the rigor with which you repay his love; and that, in short, he would think himself the happiest of mankind if you would allow him to manifest his passion in the usual course of gallantry. This discourse (added she) sufficiently proves that I am not mistaken."

Don George's daughter changed countenance all of a sudden, and darting a severe look at her maid: "You might have dispensed (said she) with repeating that impertinent conversation to me. Let me have no such reports for the future if you please: and if that rash youth shall have the presumption to speak to you again, tell him to make his addresses to one who will regard his gallantry more than I do, and to choose a more honorable pastime than that of being all day long at his windows to observe what I do in my apartment."

All this was faithfully reported to me, in a second interview with Felicia, who pretending that I must not take the words of her mistress in a literal sense, would have persuaded me that the affair went on swimmingly. But I, who was ignorant of finesse, and did not believe that the text could be explained in my favor, distrusted the commentary she made. She laughed at my diffidence, called for paper and ink, and said: "Signior Knight, write immediately to Donna Helena in the style of a deprecating lover. Paint your sufferings in the most passionate colors, and, in particular, complain of her prohibiting you to appear at your windows. Promise to obey her, but at the same time assure her that it will cost you your life. Put this into such expressions as you gentlemen are so well skilled in, and leave the rest to me. I hope the event will do more honor to my penetration than you imagine."

Had I neglected this, I should have been the first lover who did not take the advantage of such an opportunity to write to his mistress. I composed a most pathetic letter, and before I sealed it, showed it to Felicia, who, having read it, said, with a smile, "that if women have the art of captivating the men, these last, in return, know very well how to cajole the women." The waiting-maid took my letter, then laying strong injunctions on me to keep my windows shut for a few days, returned to the house of Don George.

"Madam, (said she to Donna Helena, when she went home,) I met Don Gaston, who did not fail to make up to me, and endeavored to soothe me with flattering expressions. He asked with a faltering voice, like a criminal who expects his sentence, if I had delivered his message to you. Then I, faithful and ready to execute your orders, cut him short with a vengeance; inveighed against him, loaded him with reproaches, and left him in the street confounded at my petulance." "I am overjoyed (replied Donna Helena) that you have rid me of that importunate young fellow; but there was no occasion to speak rudely to him. A young woman ought always to be gentle in her behavior." "Madam, (said the maid,) a passionate lover is not to be banished by words pronounced with a gentle air. Nay, this is seldom accomplished by indignation and rage. Don Gaston, for example, was not repulsed. After having loaded him with reproaches (as I have said), I went to the house of your relation, whither you sent me; and that lady unfortunately detained me too long: I say too long, because, on my return, I found my man again, whom, I assure you, I did not expect to see. I was so much disturbed at sight of him, that my tongue, which never failed me before, could not furnish me with one syllable. In the mean time, what does he? He slept a paper into my hand, which I kept, without knowing what I did, and then disappeared in an instant."

So saying, she pulled my letter out of her bosom, and gave it, by way of joke, to her mistress, who, taking it as for diversion, read it over, and then affected reserve. "Truly, Felicia, (said she, with a serious air,) you are a fool and a mad creature to receive this billet. What will Don Gaston think of it? and what must I believe? Your conduct gives me cause to distrust your fidelity, and may make him suspect that I am pleased with his passion. Alas! perhaps he imagines, at this instant, that I perseu with pleasure the characters which he has wrote." "O! not at all, Madam, (replied the maid,) he can entertain no such thoughts: and suppose he did, he shall not preserve them long. I will tell him, when

* Alas! a year of pleasure passes like a fleeting breeze: but a moment of misfortune seems an age of pain.

I next see him, that I have shown his letter to you; that you looked at it with indifference; and, in short, without reading it, tore it with the most mortifying contempt."

"You may safely swear that I have not read it," (said Donna Helena.) "I should be at a loss, if obliged, to repeat two single words of it." Don George's daughter was not contented with talking in this manner; she tore my billet, and forbid her woman to talk to me for the future.

As I promised to play the gallant no more at my windows since the sight of me gave offence, I kept them shut several days, to render my obedience more affecting; but to supply those looks of which I was abridged, I prepared new serenades for my cruel Helen. One night I repaired under her balcony with musicians, and the guitars were already struck up, when a cavalier came, sword in hand, and disturbed the concert, laying about him at a furious rate among the performers, who immediately betook themselves to flight. The rage which animated that bold intruder awaked mine: I advanced to punish him, and an obstinate combat began. Donna Helena and her attendant hearing the noise of swords, looked through the lattice, and seeing two men engaged, waked Don George and his valets with their cries: these, as well as several people in the neighborhood, came running to part the combatants, but they arrived too late, and found nobody on the field of battle but a cavalier, almost without life, weltering in his own blood; and I was soon known to be that unfortunate person. I was carried to the house of my aunt, whither the most expert surgeons in town were called to my assistance. Every body pitied my fate, and Donna Helena in particular, who then discovered the bottom of her soul. Her dissimulation gave way to her sentiment, and she was no longer that disdainful creature who piqued herself upon appearing insensible to my passion. She was now a tender lover, that abandoned herself to sorrow without reserve. She spent the rest of the night in mourning for her maid, and in cursing her cousin Don Augustin de Olighera, who they concluded must have been the author of their tears; as in effect it was he who had so disagreeably interrupted the serenade. Being as great a dissembler as his cousin, he had perceived my intentions, without seeming to take any notice of them; and imagining that she favored my flame, had committed this action to show that he was not quite so passive as she believed him to be. Nevertheless, this melancholy accident was soon forgotten, by reason of the joy that followed it. Though I was dangerously wounded, the skill of the surgeons saved my life; but I still kept my chamber, when my aunt Donna Eleonora went to Don George, and demanded his daughter for me in marriage. The father consented to this the more willingly, because he at that time looked upon Don Augustin as a man whom perhaps he should never see again. The good old gentleman was afraid that his daughter would not bestow herself on me without reluctance, because her cousin Olighera had enjoyed the liberty of visiting her when he would, and of acquiring her affection at leisure; but she seemed so well disposed to obey her father in this affair, that we may conclude it is an advantage among the ladies to be a new comer in Spain, as well as elsewhere.

As soon as I could have a private conversation with Felicia, I understood how much afflicted her mistress had been at the bad success of my duel; so that, having no longer any reason to doubt that I was the Paris of this Helen, I blessed my wound, since it turned out so propitious to my love, and obtained of Signior Don George the permission of speaking to his daughter in presence of her maid. What a delightful conversation this was! I entreated, I pressed the lady in such a manner, to tell me if her father, in yielding her to my tenderness, had done any violence to her inclination, that she owned I was not beholden to her obedience alone. After this charming confession, my whole study was to please her, and contrive entertainments, until the day of our nuptials, which were to be celebrated by a magnificent cavalcade, in which all the nobility of Coria and the neighborhood intended to appear.

I gave a grand entertainment to Don George and his daughter, with all his relations and friends, at a superb country-house which my aunt had without the town, on the side of Manroi. Here a concert of vocal and instrumental music was prepared by my order, together with a company of strollers, to represent a comedy. In the middle of the feast, one came and whispered to me, that there was a man in the hall who wanted to speak with me. I got up from table to see who it was, and found a stranger, who looked like a valet de chambre, and who presented to me a letter, which I opened, and read these words:

"If you have a regard for your honor, as every knight of your order ought to have, you will not fail to be to-morrow morning in the plain of Manroi, where you will find a cavalier ready to give satisfaction for the injury you received from him, and to put you, if he can, out of condition to espouse Donna Helena. Don Augustin de Olighera."

If love has great influence over the Spaniards, revenge has still more. I could not read this billet in tranquillity. The very name of Don Augustin kindled a fire in my veins, which had almost made me forget the indispensable duty which I had that day to perform. I was tempted to steal away from the company, and go in search of my enemy on the instant. I constrained myself, however, for fear of disturbing the feast, and said to the man who brought the letter, "Friend, tell the cavalier who sent you, that I am too desirous of re-engaging him, to fail of meeting him to-morrow morning before sunrise at the appointed place."

Having sent away the messenger with this answer, I rejoined my guests, and resumed my place at table, where I composed my countenance so well, that nobody had the least suspicion of what passed within me. I appeared during the

rest of the day as much entertained as any of them with the pleasures of the feast, which ended about midnight, when the assembly broke up, and every one returned to the town, in the same manner as he had come out. As for my part, I staid in the country-house, on pretence of taking the air next morning; but the true reason was, that I might be the sooner at the rendezvous. Instead of going to bed, I waited with impatience for day, which as soon as I perceived, I mounted my best horse, and set out alone as if intended to take a ride in the country. I advanced towards Manroi, and discovered in the plain a man on horseback, coming towards me at full speed; upon which I put spurs to my horse, to save him one half of the way. We soon met, and I found it was my rival. "Knight (said he in an insolent tone), it is with regret that I come to blows with you a second time; but it is your own fault. After the adventure of the serenade, you ought to have renounced Don George's daughter with a good grace; or at least have concluded that you would not be so easily quit if you persisted in your addresses to her." "You are too proud (answered I) of an advantage which perhaps you owed more to the darkness of the night than to your superior skill. You don't consider that the success of these rencounters depends often on accident." "It is never accidental with me (said he, with an arrogant air), and I will now show you, that by day as well as night I know how to punish those audacious knights who interfere with me."

I made no reply to this haughty speech, but alighted instantly. Don Augustin did the same; we tied our horses to a tree, and began to fight with equal vigor. I will frankly own that I had to do with an enemy who pushed much better than I, although I had been two years at school. He was a complete fencer: I could not possibly have exposed my life to greater danger. Nevertheless, as it often happens that the strongest is vanquished by the weakest, my rival, in spite of all his skill, received a thrust that went through his heart, and fell stone dead in an instant.

I returned immediately to the country-house, where I informed a valet de chambre, whom I could trust, of what had happened, and said to him, "Dear Ramira, before justice can take cognizance of this event, take a good horse, and give my aunt notice of the adventure. Ask for her some money and jewels, and bring them to me at Plazencia, where thou wilt find me in the first inn you come to as you enter the city."

Ramira acquitted himself of his commission with such diligence that he arrived at Plazencia three hours after me. He told me that Donna Eleonora was more pleased than afflicted at the news of a duel that revenged the affront which I had received in the first; and that she had sent me all her ready money and jewels, to enable me to travel agreeably in foreign countries, until she should get the affair accommodated.

To pass over superfluous circumstances, I will only inform you that I crossed New Castile to the kingdom of Valencia, in order to embark at Denia, from whence I took passage for Italy, where I put myself in a condition to visit different countries, and appear in a suitable character.

While far from my Helen, I endeavored as much as in me lay, to beguile my love and sorrows, she mourned my absence in secret at Coria. Instead of approving of the prosecution that her family set on foot against me on account of Olighera's death, she wished that all enmity might cease, and my return be hastened by a speedy accommodation. Six months had already elapsed since she had lost me, and I believe her constancy would have still triumphed over time, had she had nothing else but time to combat; but she had still more powerful enemies. Don Blas de Combados, a gentleman from the western side of Galicia, came to Coria to take possession of a rich estate which had been in vain disputed by his cousin Don Miquel de Caparra; and he settled in that country, finding it more agreeable than his own. Combados was well made, had an agreeable polite behavior, and was one of the most insinuating men in this world; so that he soon became acquainted with all the people of fashion in the town, and was no stranger to their private affairs.

It was not long before he learned that Don George had a daughter, whose dangerous beauty seemed to inflame the men only for their ruin. This piqued his curiosity; he longed to see such a formidable lady: for this purpose, he sought the friendship of her father, and succeeded so well, that the old man already looked upon him as his son-in-law; gave him admittance to his house, and the liberty of speaking in his presence to Donna Helena. The Galician soon fell in love with her. That was inevitable. He opened his heart to Don George, who consented to his proposal; but told him, that, resolving not to constrain his daughter, he left her mistress of her own hand. Upon this, Don Blas put in practice all the gallantries which he could devise to please the lady, who seemed insensible to them all, so much was her heart engrossed by me. Felicia, however, was in the interest of the cavalier, who engaged her by presents to espouse his cause. She therefore employed all her address in behalf of his passion; on the other hand, her father seconded the chambermaid by his remonstrances; but nevertheless, all their efforts, during a whole year, could only torment Donna Helena, without shaking her constancy in the least.

Combados seeing that Don George and Felicia interested themselves for him in vain, proposed an expedient to overcome the obstinacy of a lover so prepossessed as she was. "This (said he) is what I have contrived: we will suppose that a merchant of Coria has received a letter from an Italian factor, in which, after a detail of things concerning commerce, are the following words:

"A Spanish cavalier, whose name is Don Gaston de Cagollos, has lately arrived at the court of Parma. He calls himself nephew and sole heir of a rich widow who lives at Coria, under the name of Donna Eleonora de Laxarilla. He

has demanded the daughter of a powerful nobleman in marriage, but will not succeed until the truth is known. I am desired to apply to you for this purpose: pray let me know then if you are acquainted with this Don Gaston, and in what the riches of his aunt consist; for your answer will decide the marriage. "Parma, &c."

The old man looked upon this trick as a piece of wit or stratagem pardonable in love; and the waiting-woman, still less scrupulous than her master, approved of it very much. The invention seemed to them the more ingenious, as they knew Helena to be a proud girl, capable of taking an instantaneous resolution, provided she should have no suspicion of the cheat. Don George undertook to inform her of my change; and to make the thing seem more natural, carried along with him the merchant who had received the pretended letter from Parma. The scheme was executed accordingly. The father, in an affected passion of rage and vexation, said to Helena, "Daughter, I will no longer observe to you, that my relations daily request that I will not admit the murderer of Don Augustin into my family. I have a stronger reason to give you to-day, in order to detach you from Don Gaston. You ought to be ashamed of your fidelity to him: he is a fickle perfidious wretch. Here is a certain proof of his infidelity. Read this letter, which a merchant of Coria has received from Italy." Helena, trembling, took the fictitious letter, read it over, considered every expression, and was thunderstruck at the news of my inconstancy. A sentiment of tenderness made her shed some tears: but soon recalling all her pride, she dried them up, and said to her father in a resolute tone, "Signior, you have been witness of my weakness, bear witness also of the victory I gain over myself. It is done. I now despise Don Gaston, and look upon him as the lowest of mankind. But let us talk no more about him. Come, I am ready to follow Don Blas to the altar; let my marriage precede that of the perfidious man who has so ill repaid my love." Don George, transported with joy at these words, embraced his daughter, applauded her vigorous resolution, and glad of the happy success of his stratagem, made haste to complete the happiness of my rival.

Donna Helena was thus ravished from me. She yielded herself suddenly to Combados, without listening to love, which at the bottom of her heart spoke in my behalf, or even doubting a moment of a piece of news which might have been suspected in a lover of less credulity. The haughty maid listened to nothing but her pride; and the resentment of the injury which she thought her beauty had received, prevailed over the interest of her tenderness. A few days after her marriage, however, she felt some remorse for having been so precipitate. She reflected that the merchant's letter might have been feigned, and that suspicion gave her some uneasiness; but the amorous Don Blas gave his wife no time to cherish thoughts prejudicial to her repose. His sole study was to amuse her; and in this he succeeded by a continual succession of various pleasures, which he had art enough to invent.

She seemed very well satisfied with such a gallant husband, and they lived together in perfect harmony, when my aunt accommodated my affair with the relations of Don Augustin; and wrote immediately to Italy to advertise me of her success. Being then at Reggio, in the farthest part of Calabria, I went over into Sicily, from thence to Spain, and at length repaired to Coria on the wings of love. Donna Eleonora, who had not in her letter mentioned the marriage of Don George's daughter, informed me of it on my arrival; and observing that I was afflicted at the news, "You are in the wrong, nephew," (said she), "to be so much grieved at the loss of an unfaithful woman. Take my advice, and banish from your memory a person unworthy of possessing a place in it."

As my aunt was ignorant of the deceit which had been practised on Donna Helena, she was in the right to talk in this manner, and could not have given me a more prudent advice; which therefore I promised to follow, or at least to affect an air of indifference, if I should find myself incapable of vanquishing my passion. I could not, however, resist my curiosity to know how this marriage had been made; and, to be informed of all the particulars, I resolved to apply to Felicia's friend, Dame Theodora, whom I have mentioned before. I went to her house, and there by accident found Felicia, who, expecting nothing less than to see me, was confounded, and endeavored to go away that she might avoid an explanation which she concluded I would demand. I stopped her, saying, "Why do you fly me? Is not the perjured Helena satisfied with having made a sacrifice of my happiness? Has she forbid you to hear my complaints? or do you only want to escape me, that you may make a merit with the ungrateful woman of having refused me the hearing?"

"Signior, (answered the waiting-woman,) I freely own myself confounded at your presence. I cannot behold you again without feeling my heart torn with remorse. My mistress has been deceived, and I have been an unfortunate accomplice in seducing her." "O heaven! (cried I,) have you the presumption to tell me so? Explain yourself immediately." Then she gave me an account of the stratagem which Combados had practised to rob me of Donna Helena; and perceiving that her detail pierced me to the very soul, strove to give me some consolation: she offered me her good offices with her mistress, promised to disabuse her, to paint my despair; in a word, to spare nothing to soften the rigor of my destiny: in fine, she gave me hopes that assuaged my sorrows a little.

I pass over the infinite contradictions she underwent before she could prevail upon Donna Helena to see me. This, however, she accomplished; and it was concerted between them, that I should be privately admitted into the house of Don Blas, the first time he should go to an estate, where he usually spent a day or two in hunting. The design was soon

put in execution: the husband set out for the country; I was informed of the occasion, and one night introduced into his wife's apartment.

I would have begun the conversation with reproaches; but my mouth was stopped. "It is in vain to recall what is past," said the lady; the business here is not a fond reconciliation; and you are mistaken if you believe me disposed to flatter your inclination. I declare to you, Don Gaston, that my own motive for giving my consent to this private interview, in consequence of the pressing instances which have been made, is to tell you from my own mouth, that henceforth you must study to forget me altogether. Perhaps I might have been better satisfied with my fate had it been joined to yours; but since heaven hath ordained it otherwise, I cheerfully submit to its decrees."

"How, Madam! (answered I,) is it not enough that I have lost you, and see the happy Don Blas in quiet possession of the only person I am capable of loving? must I also banish you from my thoughts? You would deprive me of my love, and rob me of the only blessing that now remains. Ah, cruel woman! do you think it possible for any man whom you have once charmed to retrieve his heart? Know yourself better, and cease exhorting me in vain to chase your idea from my remembrance." "Well then, (she replied with precipitation,) do you also cease to hope that I will favor your love with any return. I have but one word to say: the wife of Don Blas shall never be the lover of Don Gaston. Take your measures accordingly; fly from this place; and let us put a speedy end to a conversation, with which I uphold myself in spite of the purity of my intentions; and which I shall think myself guilty in prolonging."

At these words, which deprived me of the least glimpse of hope, I fell at her feet: I addressed her in the most pathetic manner; I even employed tears to melt her; but all this served only to excite, perhaps, some sentiments of pity, which she was careful of concealing, and which were sacrificed to her duty. After having to no purpose exhausted all my moving expressions by prayers and tears, my tenderness changed of a sudden into rage. I unsheathed my sword, to stab myself before the eyes of the inexorable Helena; who no sooner perceived my intention, than she threw herself upon me to prevent the consequence. "Hold, Cogollos, (said she,) is it thus you consult my reputation? In depriving yourself of life, you are going to load me with dishonor, and make my husband pass for an assassin."

I was so possessed with despair, that, far from yielding to these words the attention which they deserved, my whole endeavor was to baffle the efforts of the mistress and her maid, to save me from my own fatal design; and without doubt I should have succeeded but too soon, if Don Blas, who, having been apprised of our interview, instead of going to the country, had concealed himself behind the tapestry, to overhear our conversation, had not come and joined us with all expedition. "Don Gaston, (cried he, holding my arms,) recall your scattered reason; and do not basely yield to the fury that transports you."

"Is it your business (said I, interrupting Don Blas) to dissuade me from my design? You ought rather, with your own hand, to plunge a poniard into my bosom. You are injured by my passion, unfortunate as it is. Is it not enough that you surprise me at night, in your wife's apartment? is there more required to rouse your revenge? Stab me at once, and rid yourself of a man who cannot cease adoring Donna Helena until he ceases to live." "In vain (answered Don Blas,) you endeavor to interest my honor so far as to give you death: you are sufficiently punished by your rashness; and I am so well pleased with the virtuous sentiments of my wife, that I pardon the occasion which she took to show them. Take my advice, Cogollos, (added he,) do not despair like a weak lover, but submit to necessity with courage."

The prudent Galician, by such discourse, calmed my rage a little, and waked my virtue: I retired with a design of removing far from Helena, and the place that she inhabited; and in two days returned to Madrid, where, resolving to employ myself wholly in making my fortune, I appeared at court, and there began to make friends; but was so unlucky as to attach myself in particular to the Marquis of Villareal, a Portuguese nobleman, who, being suspected of a design to deliver Portugal from the dominion of Spain, was imprisoned in the castle of Alicante, where he now remains. As the Duke of Lerma knew that an intimacy subsisted between that nobleman and me, he caused me to be arrested also, and conducted to this place: that minister believes that I am capable of being an accomplice in such a scheme; and he could not have committed a greater outrage upon a noble Castilian.

Here Don Gaston left off speaking; and I, to console him, said, "Signior Cavalier, your honor can receive no stain from this disgrace, which will, doubtless, in the end, turn to your advantage. When the Duke of Lerma shall be convinced of your innocence, he will certainly bestow upon you a considerable employment, in order to re-establish the reputation of a gentleman unjustly accused of treason."

CHAPTER VII.

Scipio finds Gil Blas in the tower of Segovia, and tells him a great deal of news.

OUR conversation was interrupted by Tordesillas, who, coming into the chamber, addressed himself to me in these terms: "Signior Gil Blas, I have been speaking to a young man who presented himself at the prison gate, and asked if you was not in confinement here. When I refused to satisfy his curiosity, he seemed very much mortified. 'Noble captain, (said he, with tears in his eyes,) don't reject the humble request I make, to know if Signior de Santillana is in this place. I am his chief domestic, and you will do a chari-

table action in allowing me to see him. You are looked upon in Segovia as a gentleman of great humanity; and I hope you will not refuse me the favor of conversing a moment with my dear master, who is not so guilty as unfortunate.' In short, (continued Don Andrea,) the young man expressed such a desire of seeing you, that I have promised to give him that satisfaction at night."

I assured Tordesillas, that he could not do me a greater pleasure than to admit a young man, who probably had something to communicate which it imported me very much to know. I waited with impatience for the moment that was to offer my faithful Scipio to my eyes; for I did not doubt that it was he; and I was not mistaken. He was introduced into the tower in the evening; and his joy, which mine alone could equal, broke forth in extraordinary transports when he saw me. For my part, I was so much overjoyed at sight of him, that I held out my arms, and he hugged me in his without ceremony: the distinction between master and secretary was lost in this embrace; so glad were they to see one another.

When we were a little disengaged, I interrogated Scipio about the condition in which he left my house. "You have no house, (he replied;) and, to spare you the trouble of asking unnecessary questions, I will tell you, in two words, what passed at home. Your effects were pillaged, as well by the soldiers as by your own servants, who, looking upon you as a lost man, paid themselves their own wages with what they could carry off. Luckily for you, I had the address to save from their talons two large bags of double pistoles, which I took out of your strong box, and secured, by putting them into the custody of Salero, who will re-deliver them as soon as you shall be released from this tower, where I believe you will not be long boarded at his majesty's expense; because you was apprehended without the knowledge of the Duke of Lerma."

I asked how he came to know his excellency had no hand in my misfortune. "O! as for that, (said he,) I took care to be well informed: a friend of mine, who enjoys the confidence of the Duke d'Uzeda, told me all the particulars of your imprisonment. 'Calderona (said he) having discovered, by the officiousness of a valet, that Signior Sirena, under another name, received the Prince of Spain in the night-time; and that this intrigue was conducted by the Count de Lemos, with the assistance of Signior de Santillana, resolved to be revenged upon them as well as upon his mistress. With this view he went privately to the Duke d'Uzeda, and discovered the whole affair. The Duke, ravished at having in his hand such an opportunity of ruining his enemy, did not fail to use it: he informed the King of what he had heard, and represented to him with great zeal the perils to which the Prince had been exposed. This piece of news roused the indignation of his majesty, who immediately ordered Sirena to be shut up in the house of correction, banished the Count de Lemos, and condemned Gil Blas to perpetual imprisonment.' This (added Scipio) is what my friend told me; by which you see that your misfortune is the work of the Duke d'Uzeda, or rather of Calderona."

From this information, I imagined that my affairs might be retrieved in time; that the Duke of Lerma, piqued at his nephew's exile, would exert himself to have that nobleman recalled to court; and I flattered myself that I should not be forgotten by his excellency. What a fine thing hope is! It consoled me all of a sudden for the loss of my effects, which had been stolen; and made me as merry as if I had cause to be so. Far from regarding my prison as an unhappy abode where I should perhaps end my days, it appeared rather as the means that fortune had used to raise me to some great post; for I reasoned with myself in this manner: The partisans for the prime minister are Don Fernando Borgia, Father Jerome of Florence, and, in particular, Brother Lewis d'Altaga, who owes to his interest the place he at present possesses at court. With the assistance of these powerful friends, his excellency will demolish all his foes; or perhaps the state will soon alter its appearance: his majesty is very sickly; and as soon as he shall be no more, the Prince, his son, will begin his reign by recalling the Count de Lemos, who will immediately release me from this place, and present me to the new monarch, who will load me with favors. Thus, already elevated with future pleasures, I scarce felt my present misfortune: but I believe the two bags of doubloons, which my secretary told me he had deposited with the goldsmith, contributed, as much as this hope, to the sudden change of my disposition.

I was too well satisfied with the zeal and integrity of Scipio to be silent on that subject: I offered him the half of the money which he had preserved from the pillage; but this he refused: "I expect (said he) another mark of acknowledgment." As much surprised at this discourse as at his refusal, I asked what I could do for him. "Don't let us part, (answered he;) allow me to attach my fortune to yours: I have a friendship for you which I never felt for any other master." "And I can assure thee, child (said I,) there is no love lost; the very first moment thou camest to offer thy service, I was pleased with thy appearance: we must have been born under the Balance or Gemini, which are said to be the two constellations that unite the friendship of men. I willingly accept the society thou hast proposed; and will begin it, by entreating the keeper to shut thee up with me in this tower." "Nothing can give me more pleasure, (cried he;) you anticipate my desire. I was just going to conjure you to ask that favor of him: your company is dearer to me than liberty itself: I will only sometimes go to Madrid on the scout, and see if some change may not have happened at court which can be favorable to you: so that in me you will enjoy at once a confidant, courier, and spy."

These advantages were too considerable to be rejected: I therefore kept along with me a person so useful, with the per-

mission of the obliging keeper, who could not refuse me such an agreeable consolation.

CHAPTER VIII.

The motives and success of Scipio's first journey to Madrid. Gil Blas falls sick: the consequence of his distemper.

IF it be usually observed, that we have no greater enemies than our domestics, it must likewise be owned, that when they happen to be faithful and affectionate, they are our best friends. After the zeal that Scipio had manifested, I could not look upon him but as another self. There was, therefore, no more subordination between Gil Blas and his secretary; no more ceremony; they lodged together in the same room, using the same table and bed.

There was a great deal of gaiety in Scipio's conversation; he might have been justly surnamed the good-humored lad: besides, he had a good head, and I profited by his advice. "Friend, (said I to him one day,) methinks it would be no bad scheme for me to write to the Duke of Lerma: this could produce no bad effect: what is thy opinion of the matter?" "Yes; but, (answered he,) the great are so different from themselves, at different times, that I don't know how your letter will be received: nevertheless, I am of opinion that you should write. In the mean time, although the minister loves you, you must not trust to his friendship for being remembered by him: these kind of patrons easily forget those who are out of sight or hearing."

Although this was but too true, I replied, "I judge more favorably of my patron, to whose kindness for me I am no stranger: I am persuaded that he pities my affliction, which incessantly presents itself to his mind: he probably waits until the King's wrath shall subside, before he takes me out of prison." "In good time, (he resumed;) I wish your opinion of his excellency may be right: improve his assistance then by a very moving letter, which I will carry to him; and I promise to deliver it into his own hand."

I immediately called for paper and ink, and composed a morsel of eloquence, which Scipio thought very pathetic, and Tordesillas preferred even to the homilies of the archbishop of Granada.

I flattered myself that the Duke of Lerma would be moved with compassion in reading the melancholy account which I gave him of the miserable condition in which I was, and in that confidence dispatched my courier: who no sooner arrived at Madrid, than he went to the minister's house, and met a valet de chambre of my acquaintance, who procured for him an opportunity of speaking to the Duke. "My lord, (said Scipio, presenting to his excellency the packet with which he was intrusted,) one of your most faithful servants, stretched upon straw, in a dismal dungeon of the tower of Segovia, most humbly entreats your Grace to read this letter, which a turnkey, out of pity, gave him liberty and means to write." The minister opened and perused the letter: but although he beheld in it a picture capable of melting the most obdurate soul, far from seeming affected at my distress, he raised his voice, and, in the hearing of several persons present, said to the courier, with a furious air: "Friend, tell Santillana that he has a great deal of assurance to address himself to me, after the unworthy action he has committed, and for which he is so justly chastised. He is a wretch who must not depend upon my protection; for I abandon him to the resentment of the King."

Scipio, in spite of all his effrontery, was disconcerted at this discourse; but, notwithstanding his confusion, endeavored to intercede for me. "My lord (he resumed), the poor prisoner will die of grief when he hears the answer of your excellency." The Duke made no reply to my mediator, but by a stern look, and turned his back upon him. It was thus the minister treated me, the better to conceal the part he had in the amorous intrigue of the Prince of Spain: and this ought to be a warning to all little agents, whom noblemen use in their secret and dangerous negotiations.

When my secretary returned to Segovia, and made me acquainted with the success of his commission, I was repunged into the dire abyss of despondency in which I found myself the first day of my imprisonment. I thought myself even still more unhappy, since I had now no reason to expect the protection of the Duke of Lerma. My courage sank apace, and notwithstanding all that they could say to raise it again, I became a prey to the most keen sorrow, which threw me, by degrees, into a most violent fever.

Mr. Keeper, who interested himself in my preservation, imagining that he could not do better than call physicians to my assistance, brought two to visit me, who, by their appearance, seemed zealous ministers of the goddess Libitina. "Signior Gil Blas (said he, presenting them to me), here are two Hippocrates come to see you; they will set you afoot again in a little time." I was so much prejudiced against all manner of physicians, that I should have certainly given them a very bad reception, had I been in the least desirous of living; but at that time I felt myself so much tired of life, that I was glad Tordesillas had put me into their hands.

"Signior Cavalier, (said one of these doctors to me,) in the first place, you must repose an entire confidence in our skill." "I have a most perfect dependence on it, (answered I,) with your assistance, I am very sure that, in a few days, I shall be cured of all my distempers." "Yes, (he replied,) with God's help you shall: at least we will do our endeavor for that purpose." These gentlemen actually behaved to a miracle, and put me into such a good way, that I was visibly posting to the other world. Don Andrea, despairing of my recovery, had already sent for a Franciscan friar to prepare me for my end. The good father, having done his duty, had already

• The goddess who presides over funerals.

retired; and I myself believing that my last hour approached, beckoned Scipio to the bedside. "My dear friend, (said I to him, with a faint voice, so much was I enfeebled by the medicines I had taken and the bleedings I had undergone,) I leave to thee one of the bags which are at Gabriel's house, and conjure thee to carry the other into the Asturias to my father and mother, who must have great occasion for it if they be still alive. But, alas! I fear they could not bear up against my ingratitude: the report which, doubtless, Muscada made to them of my hard-heartedness, has, perhaps, occasioned their death. If heaven hath preserved them, in spite of the indifference with which I requited their affection, give them the bag of doubloons, and beg them, from me, to pardon my unnatural behavior. If they are no more, I charge thee to employ the money in causing prayers to be put up for the repose of their souls and mine." So saying, I stretched out my hand, which he bathed with his tears, without being able to answer one word; so much was the poor young man afflicted at the prospect of losing me. This proves that the tears of an heir are not always the tears of joy disguised.

I lay thus, in expectation of my exit; but I was balked. My doctors, having abandoned me, left the field free to nature. I was saved by their desertion. The fever, which, according to their prognosis, was to carry me off, quitted me immediately, as if it intended to give them the lie. I recovered gradually; and, by the greatest good luck in the world, a perfect tranquillity of mind was the fruit of my disease. I then had no need of consolation: I entertained for riches and honor all the contempt which the opinion of approaching death had made me conceive; and now restored, as it were, to myself, blessed my misfortune. I thanked heaven for it, as for a particular favor; and firmly resolved never to return to court, even if the Duke of Lerma should recall me. I proposed rather, if ever I should be released, to purchase a cottage, and live in it like a philosopher.

My confidant approved of my design, and told me, that, in order to hasten the execution of it, he intended to go and solicit my enlargement at Madrid. "There is a thing come into my head, (added he;) I know a person who can serve you. She is the favorite waiting-woman of the Prince's nurse, and a girl of understanding. I will make her apply to her mistress in your behalf; and will attempt every thing to get you out of this tower, which is still a prison notwithstanding the good treatment you receive in it." "Thou art in the right (answered I); go, my friend, and begin this negotiation without loss of time. Would to heaven we were already in our retreat!"

CHAPTER IX.

Scipio returns to Madrid, and procures the enlargement of Gil Blas on certain conditions. What course they steer together when they leave the tower of Segovia, and the conversation that passes between them.

SCIPIO set out once more for Madrid; and I, in expectation of his return, applied myself to reading, being furnished with more books than I wanted by Tordesillas, who borrowed them from an old commander that could not read, though he had a fine library, to maintain the appearance of a literati. I loved, in particular, good works of morality, because I found in them, every moment, passages that flattered my aversion for the court and my inclination for solitude.

I spent three weeks without hearing a syllable of my agent, who at length returned, and said to me with a gay air, "This time, Signor de Santillane, I bring you good news. Madam, the nurse, interests herself in your behalf. Her maid, at my entreaty, in consideration of a hundred pistoles that I have consigned to her, has been so generous as to engage her to beg your release of the Prince of Spain; and that Prince, who, as I have already observed, can refuse her nothing, has promised to ask it of the King his father. I am come hither in a hurry to apprise you of it, and shall return immediately to put the finishing stroke to the work." So saying, he left me, and went back to court.

His third trip was not of long duration. In eight days my man returned, and told me that the Prince had, not without difficulty, obtained my release. This piece of information was confirmed the same day by Mr. Keeper, who embraced me, saying, "My dear Gil Blas, thank heaven, you are free! the gates of this prison are open to you; but upon two conditions, which, perhaps, will give you a great deal of pain, and which I am obliged to inform you of, though not without regret. His majesty forbids you to appear at court, and orders you to quit the kingdom of Castile in a month. I am very much mortified that you are prohibited from going to court." "And I am overjoyed at it, (I replied;) God knows what my opinion of it is. I expected but one favor from the King, and I have received two."

Being assured that I was no longer a prisoner, I hired two mules, which my confidant and I mounted next day, after having bid adieu to Cogollos, and returned a thousand thanks to Tordesillas for all the marks of friendship I had received at his hands. We set out merrily for Madrid, to retrieve, from the hands of Signior Gabriel, our two bags, in each of which were five hundred doubloons. My associate said to me by the way, "If we are not rich enough to buy a magnificent estate, we can at least purchase a commodious one." "So we had a little hut, (answered I,) I should be satisfied with my condition; for, though I am scarce in the middle of my career, I feel myself quite detached from the world, and intend, for the future, to live for myself only. Besides, I must tell thee, I have formed an enchanting idea of a country life, the pleasures of which I enjoy by anticipation. Methinks I already behold the enamelled meads, hear the nightingales sing, and the brooks murmur. Sometimes I divert myself in

hunting, and sometimes in fishing. Imagine to thyself, my friend, all the different pleasures that await us in solitude, and thou wilt be as much charmed with it as I am. With regard to eating, the most simple nourishment is the best. A morsel of bread may satisfy us when we are hungry, and the appetite with which we eat it will make us think it excellent food. The pleasure does not consist in the quality of exquisite dishes, but centers wholly in ourselves; and this is so true, that the most delicious of my meals are not those in which the greatest delicacy and abundance reign. Frugality is a source of delight, and wonderfully conducive to health."

"By your leave, Signior Gil Blas, (said my secretary, interrupting me,) I am not altogether of your opinion with regard to the pretended frugality you praise so much. Why should we live like Diogenes? If we indulge our appetites a little, we shall not find ourselves a bit the worse for it. Take my advice, and since we have, thank God, wherewithal to render our retreat agreeable, let us not make it the habitation of hunger and poverty. As soon as we shall have got possession of our land, we must fortify our house with good wines, and all other provisions suitable to people of taste, who do not quit the commerce of mankind with a view of renouncing the conveniences of life; but rather to enjoy them with more tranquillity. "That which a man has in his house (says Hesiod) never hurts him: whereas that which he has not, may. It is better (adds the same author) for a man to have all things necessary in his possession, than in his wish only."

"How the devil! Mr. Scipio, (cried I,) came you to know the Greek poets? Ha! where did you pick up acquaintance with Hesiod?" "In the house of a learned man, (he replied;) I served a pedant of Salamanca some time. He was a great commentator, and would toss you up a large volume in a twinkling, composed of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin quotations, taken from books in his library, and translated into the Castilian tongue. As I was his amanuensis, I retained in my memory a great number of sentences, as remarkable as that which I repeated." "If that be the case, (said I,) your memory is well garnished. But, to return to your scheme, in what kingdom of Spain do you think we shall establish our philosophical residence?" "Vote for Arragon, (replied my confidant;) we shall there find charming spots, where we may lead a delicious life." "Well, (said I,) be it so. Let us fix in Arragon. I consent to the proposal; and I wish we may there find a place of abode, that will afford all those pleasures with which I feast my imagination."

CHAPTER X.

Their behavior at Madrid. Gil Blas meets a certain person in the street. The consequence of that meeting.

WHEN we arrived at Madrid, we alighted at a small house, where Scipio had lodged in his expeditions; and the first thing we did, was to repair to Salero, in order to retrieve our doubloons. He gave us a very civil reception, and expressed a good deal of joy in seeing me at liberty. "I protest to you, (said he,) I was so much affected with your misfortune, that I conceived a disgust at all alliances with courtiers, their fortunes are so uncertain; and therefore gave my daughter Gabriela in marriage to a wealthy merchant." "You were in the right, (answered I;) for besides that this match is more solid, a citizen who marries his daughter to a man of quality, has not always reason to be satisfied with monsieur his son-in-law."

Then shifting the subject, and coming to the purpose, "Signior Gabriel, (added I,) be so good, if you please, as to deliver the two thousand pistoles, which—" "Your money is ready for you, (said the goldsmith, interrupting me; and conducting us into his closet, showed us the two bags, with notes upon them, containing these words: "These bags of doubloons belong to Signior Gil Blas de Santillane.") There they are, (said he,) just as they were committed to my care."

I thanked Salero for the service he had done me; and, very well consoled for the loss of his daughter, carried the bags home, where we began to examine our double pistoles. The tale was just, after having deducted about fifty which had been employed to procure my enlargement. Our sole study now was to put ourselves in a condition to depart for Arragon. My secretary undertook to buy a chaise and two mules, and I provided ourselves with clothes and linen. While I was going from one place to another in the streets, bargaining for what I wanted, I met Baron Steinbach, that officer of the German guards in whose house Don Alphonso had been brought up.

I saluted that cavalier, who, knowing me also, came and embraced me with great affection. "I am extremely glad (said I to him) to see your lordship in such good health, and to find at the same time an opportunity of hearing of Don Cesar and Don Alphonso de Leyva." "I can give you a certain account of them both, (answered he,) for they are now actually at Madrid, and lodge in my house. About three months ago they came to town to thank his majesty for a post which Don Alphonso has received, in consideration of the services which his ancestors had done the state. He is made governor of the city of Valencia, without having asked the place, or even desired any body to solicit for him. Nothing can be more generous: and this shows that our monarch delights in recompensing valor."

Though I knew much better than the Baron de Steinbach what the true motive was, I did not seem to know anything of the matter; but expressed such a vehement desire to salute my old masters, that, in order to satisfy me, he carried me home with him immediately. I was curious to try Don Alphonso, and judge, by the reception I should meet with from him, whether or no he had any remains of affection for me. I found him in a hall, playing at chess with the baron-

ess; and as soon as he perceived me, he quitted the game, got up, and advancing towards me with transport, pressed my head within his arms, saying, with marks of real joy, "Santillane, have I found you again? I am overjoyed at meeting with you! it was not my fault that ever we parted: for I desired you, if you remember, not to leave the castle of Leyva. You had no regard to my request; but I am far from being angry with you on that account. I am even beholden to you for the motive of your retreat. But, since that time, you ought to have let me hear from you, and spared me the trouble of sending in vain to find you at Grenada, where Don Fernando, my brother-in-law, wrote me you was."

After this gentle reproach, he continued,—"Tell me what your business is at Madrid. You have, I suppose, some employment here. Be assured, that I share as much as ever in what concerns you."

"Signior, (answered I,) something less than four months ago I filled a pretty considerable post at court; having had the honor to be secretary and confidant to the Duke of Lerma." "Is it possible! (cried Don Alphonso, with extreme astonishment,) what! was you in the confidence of the prime minister?" "I gained his favor, (said I,) and lost it in the manner you shall hear." I then recounted the whole story, and ended my narration with the resolution I had taken to buy, with the slender remains of my past prosperity, a cottage, in which I proposed to lead a retired life. The son of Don Cesar, having listened very attentively, replied, "My dear Gil Blas, you know I always loved you. You shall be the sport of fortune no more. I will deliver you from her power, by making you master of an estate which she cannot deprive you of. Since you design to live in the country, I bestow upon you a small farm, which we have hard by Lirias, about four leagues from Valencia. You know the place, and it is a present which we are in a condition of making, without incommending ourselves in the least. I dare answer for my father's consent, and know that it will give great pleasure to Seraphina."

I threw myself at the feet of Don Alphonso, who immediately raised me up. I kissed his hand, and more charmed with the goodness of his heart than with the value of his favor, "Signior, (said I,) your behavior enchants me. The present which you make is the more agreeable, as it precedes the knowledge of a piece of service which I did you; and I would rather owe it to your generosity than to your acknowledgment." My governor was a little surprised at my discourse, and did not fail to ask what this pretended service was. I told him; and the information redoubled his surprise. He, as well as the Baron de Steinbach, was far from thinking that the government of the city of Valencia had been bestowed upon him by his interest. Nevertheless, as he could not doubt my veracity, "Gil Blas, (said he,) since I owe my post to you, I don't intend to confine my gratitude to the little farm of Lirias; I will give you along with it two thousand ducats yearly."

"Halt there, Signior Alphonso (said I, interrupting him), don't awake my avarice. I have too well experienced that riches serve only to corrupt my morals. I accept, with all my heart, your farm of Lirias, where I will live comfortably with the money which I have already in my possession. But that is sufficient; and, far from desiring more, I would rather consent to lose the superfluity of what I possess. Riches are a burden to one in retirement, who seeks only to enjoy quiet."

While we conversed in this manner, Don Cesar coming in, expressed as much joy at seeing me as his son had done before; and when he understood the obligation which his family lay under to me, he pressed me to accept the annuity which I again refused. In short, the father and son carried me instantly to a notary's house, where they caused a deed of gift to be made out, and signed it with more pleasure than they would have felt in signing a deed to their own advantage. When it was executed, they put it into my hand, saying, the farm of Lirias was no longer theirs, and that I might go and take possession of it when I would. They then went back to the house of Baron de Steinbach; and I flew to our lodgings, where my secretary was ravished with admiration, when I informed him that we had an estate in the kingdom of Valencia, and recounted in what manner I had made this acquisition. "How much (said he) may this small dominion be worth?" "Five hundred ducats per annum (I replied); and I can assure thee it is a lovely solitude, which I know perfectly well, having been there several times in quality of steward to the Lords of Leyva. It is a small house on the borders of the Guadalquivir, in a hamlet of five or six houses, and in the midst of a charming country."

"What pleases me still more in it (cried Scipio) is, that we shall have fine venison, with wine of Benicarlo, and excellent muscadine. Come, master, let us make haste to quit the world, and gain our hermitage." "I long as much as thou dost to be there (I replied), but I must first make a tour to the Asturias. My parents are there in no very agreeable situation; and I intend to conduct them to Lirias, where they will pass the remainder of their days in quiet. Heaven, perhaps, has granted me this asylum, on purpose to receive them, and would punish me if I failed in my duty." Scipio approved very much of my design, and even excited me to put it in execution. "Let us lose no time, (said he;) I have already secured a chaise; let us buy mules immediately, and set out for Oviedo." "Yes, my friend (I replied), let us depart as soon as we can. I think it my indispensable duty to share the sweets of my retirement with the authors of my being. Our journey will not be long. We shall soon see ourselves settled in our hamlet; where, when I arrive, I will write over the door of my house these two Latin verses, in letters of gold:

Inveni portum. Spes et fortuna valet.
Set me Iustitiae, Iudice nunc alios.

BOOK X.
CHAPTER I.

Gil Blas sets out for the Asturias; passes through Valladolid, where he visits his old master Doctor Sangrado, and meets by accident with Signior Manuel Ordonez, director of the hospital.

WHILE I was getting ready for my departure from Madrid, with Scipio, on my journey to the Asturias, Pope Paul the Fifth named the Duke of Lerma to the cardinalship. This Pope, being desirous of establishing the inquisition in the kingdom of Naples, invested that minister with the purple that he might engage him to make King Philip consent to such a laudable design. All those who were well acquainted with this new member of the sacred college, thought, like me, that the church had made a fine acquisition.

Scipio, who would rather have seen me in a brilliant post at court than buried in solitude, advised me to present myself before the Cardinal: "Perhaps (said he) his eminence, seeing you out of prison by the King's order, will think it unnecessary to appear any longer irritated against you, and take you into his service again." "My Scipio (answered I), you seem to have forgot that I obtained my liberty on condition that I should quit the two Castiles immediately. Besides, do you think me already disgusted with my castle of Lirias? I have told you once, and now repeat it, that if the Duke of Lerma would restore me to his good graces, and even offer me the place of Don Rodrigo de Calderona, I would refuse it. My resolution is taken. I will go in quest of my parents at Oviedo, and retire with them to Valencia. As for thee, my friend, if thou repentest of having joined thy fortune to mine, speak; I am ready to give thee one half of my money, and thou mayest stay at Madrid, and push thy fortune as far as it will go."

"How! (replied my secretary, nettled at my words), can you suspect me of having any repugnance to follow you to your retreat? My zeal and attachment are injured by your suspicion. What! Scipio, that faithful servant, who, to share your affliction, would have willingly passed the remainder of his days with you in the tower of Segovia! shall he feel any regret in accompanying you to an abode that promises him a thousand pleasures? No, no, I have no desire of dissuading you from your resolution. I must own I was a little mischievous when I advised you to show yourself to the Duke of Lerma: I wanted to sound you, that I might know if some seeds of ambition did not still remain in your breast. Well then, since you are so much detached from pomp and grandeur, let us abandon the court immediately, to go and enjoy those innocent and delicious pleasures of which we have formed such charming ideas." We actually set out in a few days, mounted together in a chaise drawn by two good mules, and conducted by a young man, with whom I thought proper to augment my train. We lay the first night at Alcala de Henares, and the second at Segovia; from whence (without staying to visit the generous keeper Tordesillas) we got to Penafiel on the Duero; and the next day to Valladolid.* At sight of this last place, I could not help heaving a profound sigh; and my companion, who perceived it, asking the cause: "Child (said I), I practised physic a long time in this city, and my conscience upbraids me with it this moment. Methinks all the sick people whom I killed come out of their tombs, and seem to ready to tear me to pieces." "What a fancy is this! (said my secretary); truly, Signior de Santillane, you are too good. Why should you repent of having labored in your vocation? Observe the oldest physicians: do they feel any such remorse? No, sure; they still go on in their old course, with the utmost tranquillity, throwing the blame of all fatal accidents on nature, and claiming honor from every lucky event."

"True, (said I), Doctor Sangrado, whose method I faithfully followed, was a man of that character. Though he saw twenty people die daily under his hands, he was so well convinced of the excellence of bleeding in the arm, and plentiful draughts of warm water, which he called his two specifics in all kinds of distempers, that, instead of suspecting his remedies, he believed that his patients died because they had not drunk and been bled enough." "Egad! (cried Scipio, bursting into a loud laugh), this must be an incomparable person!" "If thou hast any curiosity to see and hear him, (said I), thou mayest satisfy it to-morrow morning, provided Sangrado be still alive, and at Valladolid, which I can scarce believe, for he was very old when I left him, and that happened a good many years ago."

Our first care, when we arrived at our inn, was to inquire about that doctor, who, we learned, was not yet dead; but being too old to visit patients, or move about, he had given place to three or four doctors, who had acquired reputation by a new method of practice, which did not succeed a whit better than his. We resolved to stay all next day at Valladolid, as well to rest our horses as to visit Signior Sangrado, to whose house we repaired about ten o'clock in the morning, and found him sitting in an easy chair, with a book in his hand. As soon as he perceived us, he got up, and coming towards me, with a firm step considering his age, which was seventy, asked our business with him. "Mr. Doctor, (said I to him), don't you recollect me? I have the honor to be one of your disciples. Don't you remember a young man called Gil Blas, who formerly lived in your house, and was your deputy?" "What! is it you, Santillane? (answered he, embracing me); I should not have known you again. I am very glad to see you. What have you been

doing since you left me? You have doubtless practised physic all along?" "I was indeed (said I) sufficiently inclined to that profession, which, however, some strong reasons have hindered me from exercising."

"So much the worse, (replied Sangrado.) With the principles which you imbibed from me, you would have become an expert physician, provided heaven had given you grace to preserve yourself from the dangerous love of chemistry. Ah! my son, (continued he, with an air of sorrow,) what a change has happened in physic within these few years! That art is robbed of all its honor and dignity: that art, which in all times hath regarded the life of man, is now a prey to rashness, presumption, and empirics; for their actions speak, and in a little time the very stones will cry aloud against the cabals of these new practitioners. La pides clambaut. There are in this city physicians (or such as call themselves so) who are yoked to the triumphal car of antimony. Currus triumphalis antimonii. Truants from the school of Paracelsus, adorers of kermes, accidental cures, who make the whole science of medicine consist in knowing how to prepare chemical drugs. What shall I tell you? every thing is turned topsy-turvy in their method. Bleeding at the foot, for example, hitherto so seldom practised, is now almost the only evacuation in use. Those purgatives, which were formerly gentle and benign, are now changed for emetics and kermes. The whole is a mere chaos, where each does what he thinks proper, transgressing those bounds of order and sagacity which our ancient masters had so wisely prescribed."

Whatever inclination I had to laugh at such a comical declamation, I had power to resist it. I did more: I exclaimed against kermes without knowing what it was, and at a venture wished those who invented it at the devil. Scipio, observing that I made myself merry with this scene, had a mind to act in it also. "Mr. Doctor, (said he to Sangrado,) as I am grand nephew to a physician of the old school, give me leave to revolt with you against chemical medicines. My late grand uncle (rest his soul) was such a warm partizan of Hippocrates, that he often battled with quacks who spoke disrespectfully of that prince of physic. True blood will always show itself; I would willingly perform the office of executioner to those ignorant innovators, of whom you complain with such eloquence and justice. What disorder must these wretches create in civil society!"

"That disorder (replied the doctor), is more extensive than you imagine. My having published a book against the robbers of medicine was of no use. On the contrary, the mischief daily increases. The surgeons, mad with the ambition of acting as physicians, think themselves sufficiently qualified, when there is nothing to be done but to give kermes and emetics, to which they add bleeding at the foot, according to their own fancy. They even proceed so far as to mix kermes in apozems and cordial potions; and so they are on a par with your celebrated prescribers. This contagion has spread also among the cloisters. There are some monks who act both as apothecaries and surgeons. Those ages of medicine apply themselves to chemistry, and compose pernicious drugs, with which they abridge the lives of their reverend fathers. In fine, there are more than sixty monasteries of men and women in Valladolid; so you may judge what ravage is made in them, by kermes united with emetics, and bleeding in the foot." "Signior Sangrado (said I), you have reason to be incensed against these poisoners. I groan in concert with you, and share your alarms for the lives of mankind, which are so manifestly threatened by a method so different from yours. I am very much afraid that chemistry will one day occasion the total ruin of physic, in the same manner as false money proves destructive to kingdoms. Heaven grant that the fatal day be not too near."

At this part of our conversation, an old maid-servant brought in for the doctor a little light bread on a salver, and glass with two bottles, one of which was filled with water, and the other with wine. After he had eaten a morsel of the bread, he took a draught of liquor, in which indeed there were two thirds of water; but that did not save him from the reproach which he gave me the handle to vent against him. "Ah, ah! (said I), Mr. Doctor, have I caught you in the fact? You drink wine then! You who have always declared against that liquor; you who, during three fourths of your life, have drank nothing but water. How long have you acted so inconsistently with yourself? You cannot excuse yourself on account of your age; since, in one part of your writings, you define old age a natural decay, that withers and consumes us; and, in consequence of that definition, deplore the ignorance of those people who style wine the milk of old men. What, therefore, can you say in your own justification?"

"You declare war against me very unjustly, (replied the old physician.) Had I drank pure wine, you would have had some reason to look upon me as an unfaithful observer of my own method; but you see that my wine is very much diluted." "Another inconsistency, my dear master, (said I); do not you remember that you blamed the canon Sedillo for drinking wine, although it was mixed with a great deal of water? Confess freely, that you are sensible of your error, and that wine is not a fatal liquor, as you advanced in your works, provided it be drank with moderation."

These words perplexed the doctor, who could not deny that he had forbid the use of wine in his books, but shame and vanity hindered him from owning that my reproach was just; and he did not know what answer to make. To extricate him out of this dilemma, I shifted the discourse; and, in a moment after, took leave of him, exhorting him to keep his mind still against the new practitioners. "Courage, Signior Sangrado (said I to him), be indefatigable in decrying kermes, and combat against bleeding in the foot without ceasing. If, in spite of your zeal and physical orthodoxy, that empirical race should succeed in ruining true discipline,

you will at least enjoy the consolation of having done your utmost to maintain it."

As my secretary and I returned to the inn, conversing together about the diverting and original character of the doctor, a man of about five and fifty or sixty years of age passed us in the street, walking with his eyes fixed upon the ground, and a large rosary in his hand. I viewed him attentively, and easily recollected him to be Signior Manuel Ordonez, that pious director of the hospital, of whom such honorable mention is made in the first part of my memoirs. I accosted him with great demonstrations of respect, saying, "Health to the venerable and discreet Signior Manuel Ordonez! the most proper man in the world to manage the poor's money." At these words he eyed me narrowly, and answered, that he remembered my features, but could not recollect the place where he had seen me. "I was often at your house, (said I,) while you had in your service a friend of mine called Fabricio Nunnez." "Ah! I remember you now (answered the director, with a satirical smile), by this token, that you were both arch lads, and played together many tricks of youth. Well, what is become of poor Fabricio? every time I think of him I am uneasy about his circumstances."

"My motive (said I) for taking the liberty of stopping you in the street, was to give you an account of him. Fabricio is at Madrid, employed in composing miscellanies." "What do you call miscellanies?" (answered he.) "That is, (said I,) he writes in prose and verse. He composes comedies and romances: in a word, he is a young fellow of genius, and is very well received in the best families." "But (said the director), how stands he with his baker?" "Not quite so well (answered I) as with people of fashion: between you and me, I believe he is as poor as Job." "Oh! I don't at all doubt it, (cried Ordonez): let him make his court to noblemen as much as he pleases, his complaisance, flattery, and cringing, will bring still less into his pockets than his works. Remember, I prophesy that you will one day see him in the hospital."

"That may very well be, (I replied,) poetry has brought many a one to that catastrophe. My friend Fabricio would have done much better had he remained with your worship. He would by this time have rolled upon gold." "At least, he would have been in very easy circumstances, (said Manuel.) I had a regard for him, and would have, by raising him from post to post, procured a solid settlement for him in the hospital, had he not been whimsical enough to set up for a wit. He composed a comedy, which was acted by the players of this city: the piece succeeded; and from that moment his head turned. He believed himself another Lope de Vega; and preferring the smoke of public applause to the real advantages which my friendship prepared for him, demanded his dismissal. I remonstrated in vain, that he was going to quit the substance and run after the shadow. I could not detain this madman, who was actuated with the fury of writing. He did not know his own interest, (added he.) The young man who succeeded him in my service is a living proof of this. Having more judgment and less understanding than Fabricio, he applied himself wholly to the execution of his commissions, and studied to please me. Accordingly, I have promoted him as he deserved, and he now actually enjoys two employments at the hospital, the least of which is more than sufficient to maintain an honest man encumbered with a large family."

CHAPTER II.

Gil Blas continues his journey, and arrives safe at Oviedo. The condition in which he found his parents. The death of his father, and the consequence thereof.

FROM Valladolid we got in four days to Oviedo, without meeting with any bad accident on the road, notwithstanding the proverb, which says, that robbers smell the money of travellers afar off. We should have been, however, a pretty good booty; and two inhabitants of the cavern would have been sufficient to carry off our doubloons with ease; for I had not learned to grow valiant at court; and Bertrand, my moco de mulas,* did not seem of a humor to die in defence of his master's purse: Scipio was the only Hector among us.

It being night when we arrived in town, we went to lodge at an inn hard by the house of my uncle the canon Gil Perez. I was willing to understand the situation of my parents before I should appear as their son; and, for this piece of information, I could not apply to a more proper person than my landlord or his wife, who I knew to be people who were very well acquainted with the affairs of their neighbors. In effect, the landlord, after having eyed me with attention, recollecting my face, cried, "By St. Antonio de Padua! this is the son of honest usher Blas de Santillane." "Yes, truly (said his wife), it is indeed! he is very little altered: it is the same little brisk Gil Blas, who had always more spirit in his heart than beef on his bones. I think I see him still coming to this house, with his bottle for wine to his uncle's supper."

"Madam, (said I,) you have a very happy memory; but pray tell me news of my family: my father and mother are, doubtless, in no very agreeable situation." "That is but too true, (replied the landlady:) how bad sicker you may think their condition is, you cannot conceive them more distressed than they are. Gil Perez, honest man, has lost the use of one half of his body by the palsy; and in all appearance cannot last long: your father, who has lived of late with the canon, has got a defluxion in his breast, or rather is at this moment in the agonies of death; and your mother, though far from being well, is obliged to serve as a nurse to both."

On this report, which made me feel that I was a son, I left

* Moco de mulas, a mule-driver.

* Valladolid is one of the most beautiful cities of Old Castile, situated on the small river Escueva, which divides it in two, and over which is a handsome stone bridge of ten or twelve arches. In this place is an university, and no less than seventy convents, one of which is the King's palace, very much embellished by Philip the Fourth.

Bertrand with my equipage at the inn; and, attended by my secretary, who would not quit me, repaired to my uncle's house. As soon as I appeared before my mother, an emotion, which I caused in her, signified my presence before her eyes had distinguished my features. "Son, (said she with a melancholy air, after she had embraced me,) come and see your father breathe his last: you are come time enough to be struck with that cruel spectacle." So saying, she carried me into a chamber where the unfortunate Blas of Santillane, lying on a bed that too well denoted the poverty of an usher, drew near his exit. Though he was envied by the shades of death, his senses had not quite forsaken him. "My dear friend, (said my mother to him,) here is your son Gil Blas, who begs your forgiveness for the sorrows he has occasioned, and asks your blessing." At these words, my father opening his eyes, which death had begun to close, fixed them upon me; and observing, in spite of his own lamentable condition, that I was very much affected with the loss of him, seemed moved at my grief, and attempted to speak; but had not strength enough to utter one word. I took hold of one of his hands; and while I bathed it with my tears, unable to pronounce a syllable, he expired, as if he had waited for my arrival before he would breathe his last.

My mother was too well prepared for his death to be immoderately afflicted at it; and I was, perhaps, more grieved than she, although my father had never given me the least mark of his friendship in his life. My being his son was a sufficient cause for me to lament him; besides, I upbraided myself for not having assisted him in his distress: and when I reflected on my hard-heartedness, looked upon myself as a monster of ingratitude, or rather as a downright parricide. My uncle, whom I afterwards beheld stretched on a truckle bed, and in a miserable condition, made me feel fresh remorse. "Unnatural son! (said I to myself,) contemplate, for thy punishment, the misery of thy parents. If thou hadst given them a small share of the superfluity which was in thy possession before thou wast imprisoned, they would have enjoyed conveniences which the revenue of the prebend could not afford; and, perhaps, thou wouldst have prolonged the life of thy father."

The unfortunate Gil Perez was become a child again, having lost both his memory and judgment. In vain did I press him in my arms with marks of real affection; he seemed insensible of what I did. When my mother told him that I was his nephew Gil Blas, he looked at me with an unmeaning eye, and made no answer. Though blood and gratitude had not obliged me to lament an uncle to whom I owed so much, I could not have beheld him in a condition so worthy of pity without feeling the emotions of compassion.

All this time Scipio remained in a melancholy silence, partook of my affliction, and, through friendship, mingled his sighs with mine. As I concluded that my mother, after such a long absence, wanted to converse with me, and that she might be uneasy at the presence of a man whom she did not know, I took him aside, and said, "Go, my child, go, and repose thyself at the inn; and leave me here with my mother, who perhaps will think thee one too many in a conversation that will wholly turn on family affairs." Scipio, rather than put us under any constraint, retired; and I actually discoursed with my mother the best part of the night. We gave one another a faithful account of what had happened to us since my departure from Oviedo: she was minute in the detail of those mortifications she had suffered in the families where she had been duenna, and told me an infinite number of things on that subject, which I was glad my secretary did not hear, though he was entrusted with all my secrets. With all the respect that I owe to the memory of a mother, I must own that the good lady was a little prolix in her narrations; and she would have spared me three fourths of her history had she suppressed all the trivial circumstances of it: she concluded at length, and I began mine. I passed lightly over all my adventures: but when I came to the visit which I received at Madrid from the son of Bertrand Muscada, the grocer of Oviedo, I enlarged upon that article. "I own (said I to my mother) I gave that young man a very bad reception: who, to be revenged, has doubtless drawn a very faithful picture of me." "In that he did not fail, (answered she:) he told us that he found you so proud of the favor of the prime minister, that you scarce deigned to recollect him: and when he described our distress, heard him with the utmost indifference. As parents (added she) always endeavor to find excuses for the behavior of their children, we could not believe that you had such a bad heart: your arrival at Oviedo justifies our good opinion of you, and your present sorrow confirms your apology."

"You judge too favorably of me, (I replied;) there is a great deal of truth in young Muscada's report: when he visited me, I was wholly engrossed by the care of making my fortune; and the ambition that possessed me would not permit me to think of my parents. I must not therefore be wondered at, if, in this disposition, I gave an unwelcome reception to a man, who, accusing me rudely, told me, in a brutal manner, that, hearing I was richer than a Jew, he came to advise me to send you some money, of which you stood in great need: he even reproached my indifference for my family in very indecent terms. I was shocked at his freedom; and, losing patience, pushed him by the shoulders out of my closet. I own I was to blame in this encounter: I ought to have reflected that it was not your fault if the grocer wanted manners; and that his advice was never the worse for its being brutally delivered."

"This was what I represented to myself immediately after I had sent Muscada about his business. My blood spoke in your behalf; I recalled all my duty to my parents; and, blushing for shame for having performed it so ill, felt remorse, which, nevertheless, can do me no honor with you, because it was soon stifled by avarice and ambition; but having been

afterwards imprisoned, by the King's order, in the tower of Segovia, I felt dangerously ill, and that happy distemper hath restored your son to you; yes, it was my disease and imprisonment that made nature resume all her rights, and entirely detached me from court. I now thirst after solitude; and my sole motive for coming to the Asturias was to entreat you to share with me the sweets of a retired life. If you don't refuse my request, I will conduct you to an estate which I have in the kingdom of Valencia, where we shall live at our ease. You may believe I intended to carry my father thither also; but since heaven hath ordained it otherwise, let me have the satisfaction of enjoying my mother's company, and of making amends to her for my past neglect by all imaginable care." "I am very much obliged to your laudable intention, (said my mother,) and would go without hesitation if I saw no objections in the case; but I will not leave my brother, your uncle, in this deplorable condition: and I am so much used to this country, that I cannot now quit it. However, as the thing deserves due consideration, I will think of it at leisure: let us at present take care of your father's funeral." "That (said I) shall be ordered by the young man whom you saw along with me; he is my secretary, and has such zeal and understanding, that we may depend upon his care."

Scarcely had I pronounced these words, when Scipio returned, it being already day; and asking if we had any occasion for his service in our perplexity, I told him that he came very seasonably to receive an important order which I had to give. When he knew what the business was, "Enough, (said he,) I have already contrived the whole ceremony, and you may trust to my discretion." "Beware (said my mother) of making a pompous burial: it cannot be too modest for my husband, whom all the town knew to be a very indigent usher." "Madam, (replied Scipio,) had he been still more needy than he was, I would not abate two farthings of the expense: for in this I regard my master only; he has been the Duke of Lerma's favorite, and his father ought to be nobly interred."

I approved of my secretary's design, and even desired him to spare no cost: the remains of vanity which I still preserved broke out on this occasion: I flattered myself, that in being at a great expense upon a father who left me no inheritance, I should make the world admire my generous behavior. My mother, for her part, whatever modesty she affected, was not ill pleased to see her husband buried in splendor. We therefore gave a carte blanche to Scipio, who, without loss of time, took all necessary measures for a superb funeral.

He succeeded but too well; and performed such magnificent obsequies, that he brought the whole city and suburbs on my back; all the inhabitants of Oviedo, from the highest to the lowest, being shocked at my ostentation. "This minister (said one) is in a great hurry to lay out money, on his father's interment, but he is in none to maintain him." "He would have done better (said another) had he succeeded his father while he was alive, than to honor him so much now that he is dead." In short, reproaches were not spared; every one had a fling at me; but they did not stop here; they insulted Scipio, Bertrand, and me, as we came out of the church, loaded us with revilings, and hooted us as we walked along, and conducted Bertrand to the inn with a shower of stones.

To disperse the mob that was gathered before my uncle's house, there was a necessity for my mother's showing herself, and declaring that she was perfectly well satisfied with my conduct. Some ran to the public-house, in order to demolish my chaise; and this they certainly would have done, if the landlord and his wife had not found means to appease their fury and dissuade them from their design.

All these affronts, which were the effects of the young grocer's report of me through the city, inspired me with such aversion for my townsmen, that I determined speedily to leave Oviedo, where, otherwise, I should perhaps have staid a good while. This I plainly told my mother, who, being very much mortified at the reception with which the people had regaled me, did not oppose my departure. What remained now, was to know how I should dispose of her. "Mother, (said I,) since my uncle wants your assistance, I will not press you to go along with me at present; but as, in all appearance, he has not long to live, you must promise to come to my estate immediately after his decease."

"I will make no such promise (answered my mother), being resolved to pass the rest of my days in the Asturias, in perfect independence." "Will not you always (said I) be mistress in my house?" "I don't know that, (she resumed:) you may fall in love with some young girl, and marry her; then I shall be her mother-in-law, consequently we cannot live together." "You foresee misfortune (said I) at too great a distance: I have no intention to marry; but if the fancy should strike me, depend upon it I will oblige my wife to be implicitly submissive to your will." "That is promising too much (resumed my mother), I should want security for your bondsman; and would not even swear, that, in our disputes, you would not take the part of your wife rather than mine, how far soever she might be in the wrong."

"You talk reasonably, Madam (cried my secretary, joining in the conversation;) I am of your opinion, that submissive daughters-in-law are very rare. In the mean time, to accommodate matters between you and my master, since you are absolutely resolved to live in the Asturias, and he in the kingdom of Valencia, he must grant you an allowance of one hundred pistoles, which I shall bring him every year. By these means, the mother and son will live very happy at the distance of two hundred leagues from one another." The parties concerned approved of the proposal: I paid the first year's annuity per advance, and quitted Oviedo next morning before break of day, that I might not be treated by the populace like another St. Stephen. Such was the reception I met with in my own country. An excellent lesson for those people of the common rank, who, after having got a

fortune abroad, return to the place of their nativity, and affect the gentleman of importance.

CHAPTER III.

Gil Blas departs for the kingdom of Valencia, and at length arrives at Liria. A description of his house. His reception, with an account of the people he found there.

We took the road to Leon, thence to Valencia; and continuing our journey by small stages, in ten days arrived at the city of Segorba; from whence, next morning, we repaired to my estate, which was but three leagues distant from it. As we drew near this place, my secretary observed with great attention all the country-seats that presented themselves to his view on the right and left; and when he perceived one of a grand appearance, he always pointed to it with his finger, and said, "I wish that was our retreat." "I don't know, friend, (said I to him,) what idea thou hast formed of our habitation; but if you imagine that it is a magnificent house like that on some great nobleman's estate, I tell you, beforehand, that you are furiously mistaken. If thou hast not a mind to be the dupe of thy own imagination, represent to thyself the small house which Horace enjoyed in the country of the Sabines, near the Tiber, and which he received as a present from Mæcenas." "Then I must expect to see a cottage," (cried Scipio.) "Remember (I replied) that I have always given you a very modest description of it; and this moment thou mayest thyself judge whether or not I am a faithful painter. Cast thy eyes towards the Guadaluvar, and observe on its banks, hard by that small hamlet, the house, consisting of four little pavilions; that is my castle." "How the devil! (cried my secretary with surprise,) that house is a perfect jewel! Besides the noble air that these pavilions give it, it is extremely well built, and surrounded by a more charming country than even the neighborhood of Seville, which is called, by way of excellence, The Terrestrial Paradise. Had we chosen our abode, it could not have been more to my taste: a river waters it with its stream, and a thick wood lends its shade when we are inclined to walk in the middle of the day. What an amiable solitude this is! Ah, my dear master! in all appearance we shall not quit this place in a hurry." "I am overjoyed (answered I) that thou art so well satisfied with our asylum, which is more agreeable still than you imagine." Conversing in this manner, we approached the house; the gate of which was thrown open as soon as Scipio signified that it was Signior Gil Blas de Santillane who came to take possession of his castle. At that name, so respected by those who heard it pronounced, my chaise was admitted into a large court, where I alighted: then leaning on Scipio, and taking state upon myself, I went into a hall, where I was scarce arrived, when seven or eight servants appeared. They said they came to present their homage to their new master; that Don Cesar and Don Alphonso de Leyva had chosen them for my service; one in quality of cook, another as cook's assistant, a third as scullion, a fourth as porter, and the rest as lacquies, with orders to receive no money of me; these two noblemen intending to defray all the expense of my house-keeping: Master Joachim, the cook, who was the principal and spokesman of these domestics, gave me to understand that he had laid in a large stock of the best wines in Spain; and told me, that as to eating, he hoped a young fellow like him, who had been cook six years to the Archbishop of Valencia, must know how to compose ragouts that would tickle my palate. "I will (added he) fill presently to work, and produce a sample of my skill. Take a walk, Signior, while dinner is getting ready: visit your castle, and see if it be in a habitable condition."

I leave the reader to judge whether or not I neglected this visit; and Scipio, still more curious than I, dragged me from room to room. We surveyed the whole house from top to bottom; the least corner (as we imagined) did not escape our interested curiosity; and I had every where occasion to admire the bounty of Don Cesar and his son. Among other things, I was struck with the appearance of two apartments, which were as well furnished as they possibly could be without magnificence. One of them was hung with Arras tapestry, and had in it a bed and chairs of velvet, still very handsome, though made when the Moors possessed the kingdom of Valencia: the furniture of the other was in the same state, consisting of hangings made of old Genoa yellow damask, with a bed and elbow-chairs of the same stuff, adorned with fringes of blue silk. All these effects, which would have been little valued in an inventory, appeared there very considerable. After having thoroughly examined every thing, my secretary and I returned to the hall, where the cloth was laid with two covers. We sat down to table; and in a moment was brought in an olla podrida, so delicious, that we pitied the Archbishop of Valencia for having lost the cook that composed it. At every morsel we eat, my new lacquies presented to us large glasses filled to the brims with wine of a most exquisite relish. Scipio, not daring to show before them the interior satisfaction that he felt, expressed himself to me by eloquent looks; and I gave him to understand, by the same language, that I was as well satisfied as he. A dish of roast meat, composed of two fat quails, which flanked a leveret of an admirable fumet, made us quit the oil and finish our repast. When we had eaten like two gormandizers, and drank in proportion, we got up from table, and walked into the garden to enjoy a voluptuous siesta* in some cool agreeable place.

If my secretary seemed hitherto satisfied with what he had seen, he was still more so when he beheld the garden, which he thought comparable even to that of the Escorial. It is true, Don Cesar, who came frequently to Liria, took

* Siesta literally signifies the heat of the day, from noon for wards; but it is here used to express the afternoon's nap, enjoyed every day by the inhabitants of hot climates.